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A STUDY OF MESMERISM AND THE
LITERATURE OF THE 19TH CENTURY,
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO HARRIET MARTINEAU

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SYNOPSIS

This thesis studies the 19th century interest in Mesmerism, taking Harriet Martineau as a key figure.

The Introduction refers briefly to what is meant by 'Mesmerism', and stresses the importance of Harriet Martineau in the 19th century. Chapter 1 consists of a short history of Mesmerism, followed in Chapter 2 by an account of Harriet Martineau's medical history culminating in her 'cure' by Mesmerism. Chapter 3 discusses the events following that 'cure', and the reactions of contemporaries to it. Chapters 4 and 5 describe the influence of the mesmerist H. G. Atkinson upon Harriet Martineau and her work, followed in Chapter 6 by an annotated presentation and discussion of two stories by her, concerning mesmeric clairvoyance and taken from the Birmingham Collection of Martineau papers and correspondence. Some unpublished letters from the same collection are also used in the thesis. Chapter 7 describes the involvement of many notable 19th century figures in Mesmerism, and, finally, Chapter 8 is a discussion of the contemporary fictional use of Mesmerism as a literary theme.

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INTRODUCTION

Mesmerism, or Animal Magnetism, was the subject of one of the most stormy controversies in the 19th century, in which literary figures, scientists and politicians, among them some of the most intelligent minds of the age, voiced their opinion.

One aspect of the controversy centred upon the 'non-scientific', occult implications of Mesmerism. The phenomenon as initially propounded implied belief in a mysterious fluid that pervaded all the empty space in the universe. This fluid supposedly existed within the body, and by somehow transferring it from a healthy individual to a diseased person, it was believed that the malady could be extracted and dispersed.

The theory was, of course, without foundation. Nevertheless, certain suggestive, therapeutic and other elements in the techniques of mesmeric practice were based on truth. Gradually, throughout the 19th century, the occult aspects of the phenomenon were discarded, and hypnosis developed from the genuine elements to assume its role as a genuinely effective form of treatment in certain psychiatric and other branches of medicine.

During the evolutionary period from Mesmerism to hypnosis, however, scientific fact was frequently blurred by occult excesses and extremism. For example, apart from the mesmeric cures, (some of which were genuine because therapeutic and suggestive techniques were unwittingly being used), many people when entranced by submitting to Mesmerism, appeared to have visionary and clairvoyant experiences. Some of the most 'gifted' of these somnambules were reputedly able to read books which were not open before them, see through walls and into the internal physiological structure of other people, and so on.

One of the strongest, most voluble of the exponents of Mesmerism was the notable writer, Harriet Martineau, (1802 - 1876). It was claimed that, after five years as an invalid, she was cured by Mesmerism. Indeed, she appeared to have recovered.

Harriet Martineau proceeded to experiment with Mesmerism. One of the enigmas concerning her was the extent to which, for the rest of her life, she was influenced by the mesmerist H. G. Atkinson, a man of considerably inferior intellect to herself.

Harriet Martineau achieved fame as the prolific writer of tales illustrating political-economic theories. At one time she was certainly the most famous woman writer of her age. Her books were widely discussed, and during her lifetime her name was indeed a 'household word'. She knew the greatest minds of the period; many of them admired her. In her lifetime she was famous as a traveller, a campaigner, a feminist - ultimately, as an atheist but her fame declined after her death, probably due to her failure to produce a great work of imaginative fiction. Essentially a 'journalistic' writer, she wrote books about her travels, religion, history, education and philosophy, children's tales, and a considerable amount of material concerned with industry, economics and social issues. Her adult fiction was comparatively unsuccessful.

One of her most noted characteristics was her eccentricity. This raises the question of whether her belief in Mesmerism is to be attributed simply to her eccentricity? Or did it suggest rather that this intelligent woman perceived the truths beneath the apparent nonsense of the practice and the claims made for it?

This thesis attempts to answer these questions, relating them, and Harriet Martineau's whole involvement in Mesmerism, to the phenomenon in its contemporary and literary contexts.

Much of the material is drawn from Harriet Martineau's Autobiography, with Memorials by Mrs. Weston Chapman, Boston, 1877, 2 volumes, which is cited in the text as Autobiography.

The following works are frequently referred to and are cited by the author's surname:-

Theodora Bosanquet: Harriet Martineau, an Essay in Comprehension, 1927

Mrs. F. Fenwick Miller: Harriet Martineau, 1884

John Cranstoun Nevill: Harriet Martineau, 1943

R.K. Webb: Harriet Martineau, a Radical Victorian, 1960

Vera Wheatley: The Life and Work of Harriet Martineau, 1957

Additional biographical material in the footnotes is derived from the following sources:-

The Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, 1917.

Webster's Biographical Dictionary, Massachusetts, 1972

The Dictionary of Universal Biography, Albert M. Hyamson, 1966

Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage, ed. L.G. Pine, 1959

Details of all other works consulted, together with additional material relevant to the text, will be found in footnotes at the end of each chapter.

Chapter One: A Short History of Mesmerism

Mesmerism did not 'begin' in the late 18th century with its 'invention' by Mesmer. Even during his lifetime the phenomenon was more commonly called 'animal magnetism'. As F. L. Marcuse says, Mesmer himself "spoke of animal magnetism". (1)

It is therefore misleading, perhaps, that Mesmer's name was eventually given to the phenomenon. Although, as we shall see, he defined, developed and popularised the subject, the actual origins of what was involved in 'Mesmerism' were ancient. As F. L. Marcuse continues :

From time immemorial people have brought on some form of self induced hypnotic state by sitting quietly beside a murmuring stream, listening to the monotonous rhythm of a chant, staring at some bright object, or possibly at their own navels. Around the fourth century B.C., although there are reputed to be reports as early as the thirtieth century B.C., a source of information concerning the possible early use of hypnosis was to be found in certain stone tablets now known as votive tablets. (Marcuse, p.24)

Marcuse also sees suggestive-hypnotic elements "in the early history and folklore of the Druids, Celts, Africans, Chinese, and peoples of almost every conceivable culture." (Marcuse, p.26)

The mesmerists recognised the ancient roots of their 'science'. Indeed, Harriet Martineau's mesmerist friend, H. G. Atkinson, believed that Christ's miraculous powers were due to Mesmerism and clairvoyance.(2) R. K. Webb says that S. T. Hall, another well-known mesmerist connected with Harriet Martineau's cure undertook a lecture tour of the North of England in 1844, during which, in Newcastle, "he lectured on the history of mesmerism and its various forms from ancient Egypt to the present," (R. K. Webb, p.227)

In the pages of the Zoist, the quarterly publication of the London Mesmerists, there are frequent references to, and articles concerned with, the antiquity of mesmeric phenomena.(3)

Even Coleridge declared :

I think it is possible, and most probable, most highly probable, (that mesmerism) was known to the priests in Egypt - that it was conveyed by tradition to the latest periods of the Greek Empire. We find it manifestly spoken of in (Ireland), and in Piedmont it is mentioned, and it may be traced, if I mistake not, from the very earliest of times to the present day.(4)

Modern opinion partly substantiates the mesmerists' claims that the phenomenon accounted for certain Biblical miracles, including the transformation of Moses' and Aaron's staffs into serpents, and the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt. (5)

Theories of personal magnetism circulated during the Renaissance. Robert Lee Wolff says "of course occult writers from Paracelsus on had made pronouncements similar to Mesmer's about the relationship between men and celestial bodies".(6) Louis Satow says that Van Helmont, (1577 - 1644), "plumbed the fantastic natural philosophy of Paracelsus and his theories of personal magnetism", (Satow, p.37), while these ideas reached England via Robert Fludd, (1574 - 1639).

William Lang, too, referred to 'mesmeric' phenomena as being discussed during the 17th Century, before the time of Mesmer:

Without attempting to trace back to more remote periods those curious phenomena which we now class under the general name of Mesmerism, it may be mentioned, that early in the 17th century, Van Helmont, a celebrated continental physician, exhibited a knowledge of the subject in his writings, and in the year 1679, William Maxwell, an Englishman, laid down propositions very similar to those which, at an after period, were brought forward by Mesmer. (7)

Jonathan Miller relates the rise of Mesmerism to the general occult obsession of the late 18th and 19th centuries. It was one of a number of subjects which attracted considerable attention and interest, along with somnambulism, table-turning and trance-phenomena. Miller rightly regards the obsession as part of continuing, traditional interests in dreams, trances, witchcraft and necromancy, rather than as a sudden 'craze'.

(J. Miller, p.685)

Given that Mesmeric theories did not arise suddenly, in a 'vacuum', but evolved gradually from ancient and Renaissance interests in allied phenomena, it will now be appropriate to consider Mesmer himself, his ideas and activities.

What, precisely, is Mesmerism? First, it should not be assumed that Mesmerism is synonymous with hypnosis, or that hypnosis exposed or 'defeated' Mesmerism. To an extent, hypnosis in fact developed from certain elements in Mesmerism. Frequently, generalisations have been made which blur the distinctions between hypnosis, Mesmerism, and other phenomena, obstructing the formation of accurate definitions. For example :

The terms animal magnetism, electro-biology, mesmerism, clairvoyance, odyllic or odic force, and hypnotism have been used to designate peculiar nervous conditions in which the body and mind of an individual were supposed to be influenced by a mysterious force emanating from another person.(8)

Hypnosis and suggestive elements were present in Mesmerism, (which also contained a good deal of nonsense and absurdity), and these scientifically based aspects have survived the 'death' of Mesmerism and are even useful in certain forms of modern psychiatric treatment and usage.(9)

As for actual Mesmerism, the Encyclopedia Britannica entry observes: "the phenomenon of Animal Magnetism was supposed to be due to some kind of magnetic force or influence peculiar to living beings and analagous to the action of a magnet upon steel or certain metals", (p.277). It is this magnetic force, the 'fluid' of Mesmerism, which is fundamental to an understanding of the phenomenon, and which relates it to the occult.

Friedrich Anton, (sometimes referred to as Franz) Mesmer was born in 1733 near Lake Constance, Austria. Some authorities assert the birth-place to have been Iznang; others state that it was Weil. Mesmer obtained his M.D. in 1766 for work concerned with the influence of the planets upon human disease. Mesmer's interest was in the planets' motions

reaching the body through a fluid which filled the otherwise empty spaces of the universe. This universal fluid he believed to be the same as that which flowed within the body as had been suggested already in Royal Society lectures throughout the 18th century. These repeatedly suggested that the nerves were filled with an 'aether' which "served to transmit the urges of the will down towards the muscles," (J. Miller, p.686)

Mesmer concluded, therefore, that the fluid which pervaded the universe, connecting Man and the planets, pervaded the individual body too, and that this fluid was magnetic by nature. Just as the nerves conveyed the magnetic fluid from the mind to the muscles, so too the magnetism could be conveyed from one mind to another, from organism to organism, from animal to animal, (hence 'animal magnetism'). Thus it should be possible for the magnetic powers of one individual to be projected in some way and used to heal the sickness of another.

Initially, Mesmer believed that the magnetic fluid was best transferred by means of magnets, stroking the infected areas of the body with them. However, when he met a Roman Catholic priest, Gassner, in Switzerland, who was able to cure without magnets, by manipulation,(10), Mesmer discarded the magnets and began to use what came to be called 'mesmeric passes'. The mesmerist brushed or stroked the infected areas with his hands, and the magnetic fluid was supposedly transferred to the patient in this way.

Meeting insurmountable opposition to his theories in Vienna, Mesmer moved to Paris where he made Animal Magnetism a popular cult. His patients sat around a wooden tub or vat in which the magnetic fluid reputedly accumulated. The tub contained various chemicals simmered over a fire. Some believe the contents were merely iron filings mixed in water, (Blythe, p.38). The patients gripped iron bars plunged into the fluid, and frequently experienced trance and ecstasy phenomena. Sometimes they

joined hands, or were linked by cords. If there were too many patients, one would simply grasp another holding a rod, and the magnetism, they believed, flowed through to them just as effectively.

Mesmer, aware of the value of atmosphere, hung his salon with thick curtains and dim lights. He allowed strains of soft music and perfumed odours to drift through the apartments, the walls of which reflected one another in a series of mirrors. Mesmer wore a Magician's robe and glided among his patients, touching some of them and making mesmeric 'passes' towards others.

These 'passes', although they did not, naturally, convey any power from the Mesmerist to the subject, survived as the moving watch or finger of the later hypnotist. These techniques lulled the patient into a form of entranced sleep. The 'passes', therefore, genuinely inducing a hypnotic state in the patient, together with suggestion on Mesmer's part, and belief on the part of his patients, were how he effected his cures.

For Mesmer seems to have had some genuine results, especially with rheumatic complaints. Such cures may also have been due to the suggestive relieving of various deep-seated mental disturbances which caused the physiological disorders. Such elements, too, survived Mesmerism and are present in modern hypnosis, while 'fluids' and transferred magnetism are, of course, without foundation.

In 1784 Mesmer was investigated by the Academy of Sciences which concluded that the cures, though indisputable, were due to such suggestive influences and not to any 'fluid'. Immediately, Mesmer's popularity declined, although he was not an entire imposter. Kaplan observes: "Though his instinct for gain was well-developed, there is ample evidence to suggest that he was no charlatan," (Kaplan, p.692).

Mesmer died in 1815, leaving an account of Animal Magnetism: Mémoire sur la découverte du Magnétisme Animal, (1779, trans. G. Frankau, 1948). He also left many disciples, of whom the most distinguished was the Marquis de Puysegur. He moved one step away from Mesmer's occult extravagances, by showing that mesmeric phenomena could be induced by gentle manipulation causing sleep, without Mesmer's theatrical effects and violent means. Other mesmerists adopted Puysegur's ideas, including Dr. John Elliotson in England.

Mesmerism reached England in 1785, when French mesmerists began to establish practices here. Mesmer had in fact had some English disciples. In the early 1800's both French and English mesmerists set up salons in Hammersmith and Bristol, aiming to spread Mesmer's doctrines - and to make their fortunes.

Mesmerism gradually made its influence felt in medical circles. Pamphlets and essays debating the subject began to appear, such as John Pearson's A Plain and Rational Account of the Nature of Animal Magnetism, (1790), consisting of four didactic letters describing the uses and power of Mesmerism.

At this stage, most of the mesmeric theorists in England, and their opponents, were medical practitioners; lay-men and women like Harriet Martineau were not involved until considerably later.

In the 1790's an American named Perkins introduced a pair of tongs called 'tractors', which were supposed to magnetise muscular and skeletal disorders away when drawn across the skin. John Haygarth ascribed the cures thereby obtained to what he and the Bath physician William Faulkner regarded as the imaginative influences over physiological disorders. He demonstrated his point by painting a pair of wooden tongs black to make them look like iron, and used them as Perkin did, equally successfully.

He published his results in Of the Imagination, as a cause and as a cure of disorders of the body; exemplified by fictitious tractors, and epidemical convulsions, Bath (1800). His argument was still being proved nearly a century later. The Phrenological Magazine observed in March 1885: "A curious example of the force of imagination is reported from Philadelphia": apparently a Dr. Cohen was curing people of various diseases, using wooden magnets," with iron tips, to give the metallic impression to the skin".(11).

Many eminent physicians accepted the existence of the 'mesmeric fluid', including Thomas Young, (1773-1829). The first surgeon who defined how Mesmerism could have any effect was the Scottish Dr. James Braid, (c. 1795-1860), who saw the effectiveness of many mesmeric cures in terms of suggestion. Braid was particularly convinced of the importance of the characteristic gaze in achieving the trance-effect. He was the first of the 'scientific' hypnotists - those who explained how such effects could credibly be obtained. He re-named the phenomenon 'hypnotism' or 'nervous sleep', completely rejecting the notion of the fluid. However, Braid was only a child at the time of this 'first wave' of English Mesmerism.

During the early 19th century, English Mesmerism was far closer to German than French Mesmerism. The English resistance to French Mesmerism was due to the two countries being at war during the period. Mesmerism suffered through contemporary anti-French feeling, (Kaplan, p. 695), and lay dormant during the Napoleonic period. Thus declined the first wave of interest and enthusiasm for Mesmerism in England.

In 1829 Mesmerism was revived by an Irishman, Chevenix. It had meanwhile made progress in America. During the 1820's, phrenology arrived in England from Europe,(12); later it became very closely related to Mesmerism.

In 1829, Dr. John Elliotson of St. Thomas' Hospital permitted

Chevenix to demonstrate medical uses of Mesmerism. Chevenix published his findings in The London Medical and Physiological Journal, and Elliotson added a supporting memorandum. Chevenix met with considerable medical opposition.

Elliotson's interest in Mesmerism increased. In 1837 he defied his colleagues by permitting Baron Dupotet de Sennevoy to conduct further mesmeric experiments at the London Hospital.

Dr. Elliotson (13) now became the leader of the second wave of English mesmeric enthusiasm. A friend of Dickens and Thackeray, (see Chapter 7), he was the first English physician to use the stethoscope and auscultation. He founded the London Phrenological Society in 1824, and The Zoist, (14), the quarterly publication of the London mesmerists, in 1843.

Elliotson wrote Human Physiology, (1835 - 1840); later editions included sections concerning phrenology and Mesmerism. However, the work was unacceptable to many in medical circles. Elliotson's experiments had become so notorious that the London Hospital ordered him to cease them. Denying his opponents the privilege of dismissing him, he replied by resigning his professorship.

Elliotson's notoriety was the result of his involvement with two sisters, Elizabeth and Jane Okey. (15) They were probably the most famous of the 'mesmeric psychics' with the possible exception of Alex Didier, a young French somnambule. Elliotson became interested in the Okeys when they exhibited clairvoyant abilities while in the mesmerised state, and their own activities became more and more extreme as Elliotson's interest in them increased, so that a vicious circle evolved - greatly to Elliotson's misfortune. In demonstrating clairvoyance the sisters "were able to visualise their own innards," (J. Miller, p.689) - and, in deeper trances, the intestines of others. (16). Both of the sisters had been members

of Edward Irving's Catholic Apostolic Church in Regent Square prior to their mesmeric involvements, and their visionary experiences were clearly conditioned by whatever environment they happened to find themselves in. As J. Miller wryly observes: "In Regent Square they were pentecostal prophets, whereas in Gower Street they became Mesmeric Shamans," (J. Miller, p.688).

Elliotson went too far, however. In 1838 he tried to prove that the Okeys were able to select mesmerically-magnetised coins, and to see through walls. Contributory to Elliotson's fall was a series of vicious attacks on him in The Lancet, the anti-mesmeric editor of which, Thomas Wakley, (1795 - 1862), had formerly been a friend of Elliotson.

However, many continued to respect Elliotson. As if to make amends, in 1846 he was invited to deliver the Harveian Oration at the Royal College of Physicians. Defiantly, he spoke on Mesmerism, in English rather than in the customary Latin. Elliotson founded the London Mesmeric Infirmary in 1849.

It is difficult to assess Elliotson's precise role in the 'mesmeric mania'. Clearly he was no charlatan. Both Wilkie Collins and Thackeray paid tribute to him, (see Chapter 8), and he was deeply respected by many. As J. Miller says: "It is apparent ... he struck those who knew him as a man of considerable intellectual stature, and his intellectual status was matched by his warmth and compassion", (J. Miller, p.689)

Elliotson, "saw nothing but deception in many of the major mesmeric performances ... and utter absurdity in the claim of pre-vision and clairvoyance", (Kaplan, p.701)

Yet Elliotson clearly did believe in the Okey sisters. Again, Kaplan distinguishes Elliotson as a 'scientific mesmerist', grouping him with Esdaile and Braid, as opposed to the 'philosophical mesmerists' like the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend. Any such affiliation, however, can only

have been superficial. Braid rejected the concept of the universal fluid, whereas Elliotson did not.

Meanwhile, phrenology had continued in a more or less peaceful relationship with Mesmerism. As has been stated, Elliotson - now the leader of English Mesmerism - had founded the London Phrenological Society. Enthusiasts like Harriet Martineau and H. G. Atkinson were interested in, and studied, both.

Elliotson's Phrenological Society became stronger in March 1825, when the Society held a series of eighteen phrenological lectures by Dr. Spurzheim. (17). However, in the 1840's the mesmeric and phrenological movements were violently divided when, paradoxically, Elliotson and his supporters, including H. G. Atkinson, insisted on the very inseparability of Mesmerism and phrenology. The mesmerists broke with the phrenologists, and henceforth called their science 'phreno-mesmerism' or 'phreno-magnetism'. (18)

Although Elliotson led the English mesmerists, there were other important figures in the movement. One of these was John C. Colquhoun, author of Isis Revelata - An Inquiry into the Origin, Progress and Present State of Animal Magnetism, (1836). His other occult interests led to his publication of The History of Magic, Witchcraft and Animal Magnetism, (1851). He was one of the first mesmerists to reject the existence of the 'fluid' in the universe and to assert that it was to be found only within the human body and could be conveyed from mesmerist to subject by the force of will. Colquhoun, therefore, led Mesmerism a little further away from its early extravagances towards hypnosis.

The Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend was one of the mesmerists who, contrastingly, upheld the concept of the fluid, thereby resisting the movement away from the occult, spiritual side of Mesmerism. Because

of his involvements with Dickens, Thackeray and Arthur Hugh Clough, however, his mesmeric investigations are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Baron Dupotet, a protégé of Dr. Elliotson, was the author of An Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism, (1838). The work, historical, explanatory and defensive, conveys a sense of the contemporary urgency which accompanied the mesmeric movement.

Kaplan links Colquhoun, Townshend and Dupotet as having a similar approach to Mesmerism, calling them, "amateur antimaterialists, neither theologians nor scientists, gentlemen with a cause rather than intellect. Trained in nothing in particular, their imagination had become inflamed with the possibilities of a new idea, and each played a significant role in popularizing it", (Kaplan, p.700)

Mesmerism was never the preserve of the medical or scientific world. It also embraced the occult, the spiritual, the clairvoyant, and the eccentric. It was also of a vital social and political importance. This was due not only to the strong didactic impulses of the mesmerists as individuals with a cause to preach, but also to the fact that Mesmerism was based upon a central concept, a quintessential idea. The phenomenon was not only important because it appealed to the Victorian love of controversy, (19), but also because of the 'basic concept' that gave the trivialities of many séance-activities a vital social and political implication. As Kaplan says, the mesmerists:

believed that they had discovered not simply a truth ... but they had discovered the fundamental and irreducible truth which underlay all surface truths and methods. They had a clue to ultimate reality, to the power behind all things ...," (Kaplan, p.693)

Kaplan refers to the religious and metaphysical elements in Mesmerism as recognised by mesmerists like the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend.

The idea of a 'central truth', however, was held equally firmly by atheistic mesmerists such as Harriet Martineau, who wrote to Mrs. Jameson of Mesmerism: "I see in it ... an urgency by which human transactions will be as extensively modified in the future as outward modes of living will be by such discoveries as Faraday's." (20)

Miller is similarly aware of the recognition by many leading mesmerists of the wider social implications of Mesmerism; he refers to Harriet's interest in the moral influence of Mesmerism, and stresses the general interest of English Mesmerists in the moral significance, which offset accusations of the immoral use of mesmeric powers, (J. Miller, p.690).

R. K. Webb states that Mesmerism had a particular appeal to the radical mind - hence the interest in it of socially-conscious people as different from one another in other respects as Harriet Martineau, Dr. Elliotson and the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, (R.K. Webb, p.237).

Webb attempts to account for this appeal. He states, firstly, that the extraordinary social changes witnessed by these people in their lives "predisposed them to accept marvels," (ibid.) One would contest this, however: of the three whom Webb mentions, Townshend - priest and metaphysical - was the only one likely to accept easily the extraordinary supernatural claims made for Mesmerism. Elliotson's mesmeric beliefs were not based on a vague predisposition to believe in marvels, but were the outcome of what he considered a careful, lengthy process of objective scientific investigation. Again, Harriet Martineau's social experience and development led her - apart from the sphere of mesmeric clairvoyance - on the contrary, away from the marvellous and miraculous: she rejected her belief in Christianity, (see Chapters 4 and 5), particularly the supernatural aspects. Broadly speaking, her biography relates the abandonment of a strong, Unitarian faith for neo-humanism and Comptean materialism.

Secondly, and more credibly, Webb accounts for the appeal of Mesmerism to the radical mind in terms of a tendency also reflected in the attitude of the Royal Society: in the climate of extensive scientific invention and discovery, there was an inability to distinguish between genuine and bogus findings. Frequently, untried 'discoveries' were seized upon by the fascinated minds of progressive radicals.

Thirdly, Webb rightly asserts that Mesmerism implied a change in thinking, suggesting that the thinker was therefore able to recognise the need for 'change' elsewhere. He cites as evidence of this assertion various radical, politico/social ideas that the mesmerists held: he sees Atkinson's paper concerning Lord Eldon's head, read to the London Phrenological Society in April 1843, as essentially an attack on reactionaries. He also cites Elliotson's support of penal reform and his hostility towards capital punishment, adding: "The Zoist is full of demands for national education and other radical programmes"; he calls most mesmerists "free thinking materialists," (R.K. Webb, p.238). He also - importantly - sees mesmeric social activity as compatible with the aims of the Christian social reformers. (21)

Of the mesmerists, Elliotson probably held the most clear-cut theories for using the phenomenon for social purposes. He was interested in improving society, not by political upheaval, nor even necessarily by radical manoeuvre. One of his theories held that people who were 'predestined' to criminality could be detected early in life through phrenological examination, (all personality-traits being indicated by skull-shape, form etc., according to phrenological belief), and that these criminal inclinations could then be cured by mesmeric power.(22).

It is this political earnestness and intense social concern, however mis-guided its motivation may seem now, that elevated Mesmerism from the absurdities of the séance-room and the obsessions of clairvoyance-enthusiasts.

Reference has already been made to the gradual movement of Mesmerism away from its occult origins towards a more 'scientific' view: Mesmer himself rejected the use of magnets and followed Gassner's example of using manipulation; Puysegur rejected Mesmer's theatrical effects, and used even gentler manipulation; Elliotson investigated Mesmerism within the hospital system, and Braid, who rejected the concept of the 'universal fluid', first spoke of 'hypnosis' and stands at the threshold of modern hypnotism.

It is clear, therefore, that the development of scientific hypnosis had its origins in Mesmerism and was a process of gradual evolution. Statements such as the following are simply misinformed: "Both popular and scientific interest in hypnotism continued after Mesmer had been discredited."(23). To begin with, Mesmer was not a hypnotist; at the time of his being discredited, 'hypnotism' was neither generally recognised, understood nor defined.

Charles Baudouin and A. Lestchinsky have a clearer idea of the process, saying:

The learned societies of the day at length became interested in the matter, but were soon disgusted by the charlatanism and hubbub which characterised the mesmerist craze. The result was that the men of science ignored the possibility that magnetism might contain elements of truth ...

Nevertheless, mesmerism continued to develop. From it there proceeded two main currents, evolving independently for the most part, but continuing to exercise some influence on one another. In the United States, there sprang from mesmerism the philosophical or religious doctrines of mind cure."(24)

Among these was the Christian Science Movement, founded in 1866 by Mrs. M.M.B. Eddy, a disciple of another American named Quimby who was, originally, a mesmerist. Mrs. Eddy was adamant in condemning Mesmerism in favour of Christian Science which, ironically, had developed from Mesmerism. She wrote:

The author's own observations of the workings of animal magnetism convince her that it is not a remedial agent, and that its effects upon those who practise it, and upon their subjects who do not resist it, lead to moral and to physical death."(25)

As for the post-mesmeric development in Europe, Baudouin and Lestchinsky say that : "In Europe the affiliation of Animal Magnetism or Mesmerism were the scientific theories of hypnotism, suggestion and their derivatives", (The Inner Discipline, p.77)

The authors describe the descent from Mesmerism of New Thought, through Christian Science, in America, and the descent from Mesmerism of autosuggestion, through persuasion, psycho-analysis, suggestion and hypnotism, in Europe. The authors continue:

Mesmer's experiments gave rise to the dispute between the champions of the magnetic 'fluid' and the champions of the 'soul'. The fluidists declared that the manifestations witnessed ... were the outcome of the physical action exercised by the fluid that emanated from the magnetizer. The animists ridiculed the explanation and insisted that the magnetizer's powers were exclusively moral. He influenced the subject's thoughts, and this determined all else that happened.

From these discussions there originated the theories of hypnotism and suggestion, which were the expression of an attempt to break away from the miraculous and the occult, and to explain the phenomena in terms of simple psychological or physiological laws, (The Inner Discipline, p.111)

It is important, therefore, not to regard Mesmerism - the curative rather than the clairvoyant aspects - as nothing more than a historical monument, a transient and absurd obsession. Certainly the mesmerists were misguided in some of their excesses; however, the principles of suggestion and deep, therapeutic sleep - the hypnotic elements - were present in Mesmerism, were true and did lead to genuinely 'scientific' developments in psychiatry. Harriet Martineau incurred the derision of many contemporaries and became involved in some ridiculous practices and situations. However, although she probably did not realise it, she was active in a movement which led, (if through reaction against the Mesmerism in which she believed so firmly) to the realities and usefulness of certain aspects of psychiatry that survive today.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

- (1) F. L. Marcuse: Hypnosis: Fact and Fiction, (1959) Penguin edtn. (1974), p.22.

Other works used in this chapter include the following :-

Peter Blythe: Hypnotism, its Power and Practice, New York, (1971).

Bernard C. Gindes: New Concepts of Hypnosis, (1953).

- (2) Fred Kaplan: "'The Mesmeric Mania', The early Victorians and Animal Magnetism", Reprinted from the Journal of History of Ideas, vol. 35, no.4 Oct.- Dec. 1974, pp. 691 - 702.

Jonathan Miller: "Mesmerism", The Listener, vol.90, no. 2330, Nov.22nd, 1973, pp. 685 - 690.

Louis Satow: Hypnosis and Suggestion, trans. B. Miall, (1923).

When these works are directly quoted, they are cited in the text by the author's surname.

- (2) H. G. Atkinson and Harriet Martineau: Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), pp. 212-216.
- (3) The Zoist, Vol.3, Mar. 1845 - Jan. 1846, pp. 156-173, 304-316, (Classical allusions to the phenomenon).
Vol.5, Mar. 1847 - Jan. 1848, pp. 273-285 (Magnetism and Mesmerism in Antiquity).
Vol. 9, Mar. 1851-Jan. 1852, pp. 225-237, (Ancient Mesmerism, the Holy Fathers of the Church, etc.)
- (4) The Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, hitherto unpublished, ed. Kathleen Coburn, (1949), lecture X, Mar. 1st 1819, p.305,
- (5) In Exodus 7, vv. 9-12, Aaron throws down his staff and it turns into a serpent. The theory is that these staffs turned into serpents were in fact 'hypnotised' snakes. The muscular rigidity of the rod-like snakes corresponds to certain hypnotic aspects of 'mesmeric' experience, (see Harriet Martineau: Letters on Mesmerism, 1845, p.37)

It is fully possible for animals to be hypnotised. Harriet Martineau claimed to have 'mesmerised' her cow, (The Zoist, Vol. 8, pp. 300-303, 333-335); Florence Nightingale mesmerised a bear at Oxford, and Gerard Manley Hopkins mesmerised a duck, (both episodes are described in detail in Chapter 7).

The Rev. Chauncy Hare Townsend described having used mesmeric passes to revive some fish stunned by a galvanic shock in an experiment at Dresden, Facts in Mesmerism, (1844), p.xxv, and he claimed even to have mesmerised a tom-tit and a nightingale, Mesmerism Proved True, (1854), p.102.

The Zoist made reference to numerous incidents of animals being mesmerised :-

Vol. 3, Mar. 1845 - Jan. 1846, p.522, horses.
Vol. 8, Mar. 1850 - Jan. 1851, pp. 297-299, dogs, cats, horses, pigs, calves, goats, turkeys, fowls, geese, ducks, fish, elephants, lions and bulls; p.335, a steer.

These reports, which by their nature rule out the possibility of human self-delusion or gullibility on the part of the animal subjects, support the assertion that there were indisputable 'hypnotic' elements within Mesmerism.

The second relevant Biblical reference, the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, appears in Genesis, 19, vv. 17-26. The theory is that she was thrown into a hypnotic trance. Again, the factor of physical rigidity is present. (Private information).

- (6) Robert Lee Wolff: Strange Stories and other Exploration in Victorian Fiction, Boston (1971), p.134.
Aureole Philippe Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim Paracelsus (1493/5 - 1541) was a Swiss alchemist and physician.
- (7) William Lang: Animal Magnetism or Mesmerism, New York, (1844), p.9-10.
- (8) Encyclopedia Britannica, 9th edtn., (1883), Vol.15, p.277. The later quotation in the text is from this entry.
- (9) For example, The British Society of Medical and Dental Hypnosis held a course on 'some applications of Hypnosis in Medicine and Dentistry' at the Whittington Hospital Academic Centre, London, in March 1975.
- (10) H. G. Atkinson included Gassner of Swabia among those able to 'heal by touch', Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development (1851), p.349.
- (11) The Phrenological Magazine, ed. Alfred T. Story, i, pp. 113-114.
- (12) One of the earliest literary uses of phrenology is in Peacock's Headlong Hall, (1816), in which Mr. Cranium asserts:
"Every man's actions are determined by the organisation of his skull. A man in whom the organ of benevolence is not developed, cannot be benevolent," Everyman edtn., (1969), p.43.
- (13) Dr. John Elliotson, (1791-1868). The fullest account of his life is John Hargreaves Harley Williams: Doctors Differ, (1946), pp. 13-80.
- (14) The 'Zoist', a curious-sounding name, derives from "the doctrine that life depends on a particular vital principle, and is not a mere resultant of combined forces; esp. in connexion with animal magnetism", (O.E.D).

The journal was founded because The Lancet and other medical journals refused to publish mesmeric accounts.

- (15) The 'sisters Okey' were widely discussed. The Zoist published the following reports and articles concerning them :-

Vol. 3, Mar. 1845 - Jan. 1846, pp. 56 and 58.

Vol. 10, Mar. 1852 - Jan. 1853, p. 270.

Other references appeared in The Phreno-Magnet, (1843), p.225 etc. and in the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend's Mesmerism Proved True (1854), pp. 33-34, 75-76.

- (16) Such claims made for mesmeric clairvoyants were common. H. G. Atkinson wrote: "Somnambules often see through into themselves," Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), p.114.
- (17) Dr. Johann Christoph Kaspar Spurzheim, (1776-1829), was a famous German phrenologist and a student and admirer of the great physiologist F. J. Gall. Spurzheim, "was largely responsible for the enormous popularity of phrenology throughout America and Europe. He lectured extensively, and to large audiences both in the U.S.A and in Europe," John Liggett: The Human Face, (1974), pp.205-206.

Dr. Spurzheim delivered a series of lectures on phrenology in London in 1831-1832. These were published in The Phrenological Magazine, ii, (1881), pp. 193-201, 228-237; 270-279; 312-320; 364-373; 407-418; 449-457; 505-515.

'The Reminiscences of Dr. Spurzheim' appeared on pp. 169-171.

Both Spurzheim and Gall were important to H. G. Atkinson's philosophy, (see Chapter 5).

- (18) Elliotson, H. G. Atkinson and Engeldue insisted on the inseparability of Mesmerism and Phrenology, and asserted that the latter on its own could only lead to materialism. Professor Gregory, James Simpson and James Silk Buckingham vehemently disagreed, (R. K. Webb, p.241).

The relevant periodicals indicate the subsequent disharmony between Mesmerism and phrenology.

The Phreno-Magnet, edited by S. T. Hall, the mesmerist who first treated Harriet, published the following :-

Vol. 1. No. 4 (May 1843):

"Since our last publication we have glanced at The Zoist, and must say we are more than a little disappointed ... by its overweening contempt for nearly all that does not emanate from or administer to itself," (p.99).

On pp. 124-127, Mr. H. Brookes assailed The Zoist for attacking him, citing Elliotson as his principal target.

On p.131 in an article entitled 'Dr. Elliotson, Mr. Brookes, The Zoist and the Newspapers', there appeared a criticism of "the unfairness of The Zoist in attacking Mr. Brookes."

On p.220-222, H. G. Atkinson wrote to the Phreno-Magnet, upholding Mesmero-phrenology and asserting to the phrenologists: "... if you will test what I have advanced, you will soon perceive your error."

The Phrenological Magazine, Vol. 1. (1885), pp. 499-503, published an attack on the hypnotic theories of F. W. H. Myers, who had written an article in the Fortnightly Review, Dec. 1885, in which he claimed that certain criminals were not responsible for crimes committed under hypnotic conditions. The phrenological retort was :

"If Mr. Frederick Myers be right, prisoners in future may defend themselves by saying that they were hypnotised into crime", and that, "it will be seen that latter-day hypnosis is mesmerism revived under a new name," (p.502.) The article

conceded that some mesmerists are occasionally resorted to in London "by patients tired of doctors and drugs", but continued: "Compared, however, with the glowing hopes held out by Elliotson and his friends, this is a poor result. There is no mesmeric hospital, no trained staff of mesmerists, no periodical advocating the cause. The faction seems to have passed away," (p. 502).

(By this time, 1885, Elliotson was dead, his Mesmeric Infirmary with him, and the Zoist had expired in 1856).

The article concluded: "... as to mesmerism and hypnosis, the underlying truth no doubt is that there are susceptible persons who can be influenced mentally and bodily by men of strong will ... but that such patients and such operators are one in a hundred thousand ... The rest must continue to rely ... on doctors and on drugs," (p. 503).

- (19) The Mesmeric 'controversy' was, significantly, debated in the British Controversialist, when two articles were simultaneously published in defence, and in condemnation, of Mesmerism, by 'Harold' and 'C.A' respectively.

The 'affirmative' article asserted :

"The revelations of Mesmerism and Animal Magnetism seem destined to unveil before our astonished gaze a few of those sublime and infinite mysteries of being which have so much occupied the attention of philosophical minds," The British Controversialist and Literary Magazine, ii, 1851, 'Is Mesmerism True?', p. 81.

The 'negative' article, while conceding:

"Mesmerism may be based upon facts hitherto unrecognised by medical science," rejected the clairvoyant absurdities, especially the idea of "individuals who are able to discover the North passage without leaving their firesides" (p. 83).

- (20) Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson, by her niece Gerardine Macpherson, (1878), p. 208, (letter undated).
- (21) There were two basic religious attitudes towards Mesmerism. First, 'Christian Mesmerists' such as the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, the Rev. George Sandby, the Rev. Thomas South, and the poetess Anna Savage, saw mesmeric power as a Divine gift. Secondly, those hostile to Mesmerism on religious grounds were led by the Rev. Hugh MacNeill of Liverpool, and included people like Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, (see Chapter 3). Such Christians produced arguments asserting that Mesmerism was an instrument of Satan.

Opposed to both religious groups were anti-religious mesmerists, such as Dr. King and H. G. Atkinson.

- (22) Both mesmeric and phrenological publications reflected these social interests and concerns in education, the law, crime, capital punishment etc.

The Zoist published the following relevant articles:

Vol. 1., Mar. 1843 - Jan. 1844: pp. 46-54, 'Dr. Elliotson on the head of the murderer Cooper, and against the punishment of death'; pp. 139-142, 'On the Plea of Insanity'; pp. 263-266, 'Dr. Engeldue on the laws of Insanity'; p. 285, 'On Mr. Basil Montagu, his efforts to abolish hanging'; pp. 351-369, 'Education as it is'; pp. 397-405 'A Medico-legal reflection on the Trial of McNaughten, murderer'.

Vol. 2, Apr. 1844-Jan. 1845, pp. 1-20: 'Education as it is and as it ought to be'; p. 154, 'Dr. Fossati on Education'; pp. 295-316, 'Punishment of Death'; p. 443, 'Dr. Elliotson on the murderer Lawrence'.

Vol. 3, Mar. 1845 - Jan. 1846, pp. 131 and 280, 'Education'; pp. 76, 144, 152, 418, 'Materialism and necessity'; p. 399, 'selecting M.P's by phrenology'.

Vol. 7, Mar. 1849 - Jan. 1850, p. 331, 'Capital Punishment'; p. 338, 'Hanging the Insane'.

Vol. 8, Mar. 1850 - Jan. 1851: p. 69, 294, 356, 'Materialism'; p. 295, 'Punishment of Death'.

The Phrenological Magazine:-

Vol. 1, (1885), p. 171, 'An Extraordinary Case of Hypnotism', The article described a young French criminal who was discovered to be "in a state of constant somnambulism".

There was considerable interest in this possibility. Henry Cockton's novel, Sylvester Sound the Somnambulist, (1844), was a light-hearted treatment of the theme. Sylvester, a youth of impeccable character, commits various crimes while in the sleep-walking state, such as stealing peaches, (Ch. 2). The novel also refers to phrenology, (p. 303).

The Phrenological Review, (ed. B. Hollander) :-

Vol. 1. no. 3, Oct. 1905: pp. 33-45, 'The Psychology of Crime and Criminals', by Moriz Benedikt, M.D.

no. 4, Jan. 1906: pp. 55-60, 'Cranial Measurements of Schoolboys', by James Webb.

No. 1. Apr. 1906: p. 7-9, 'Phrenological Experts wanted in our Schools', by Henry Scarth.

Vol. 2, no. 2, July 1906: pp. 11-16, 'Phrenology Applied to Education', by William Cox.

The later date of these latter articles indicates the persistence of socially orientated phrenology apart from the surprisingly late survival of phrenology itself.

The best recent study of the subject is David de Giustino: The Conquest of Mind, Phrenology and Victorian Social Thought, Brisbane, (1975).

- (23) Norman Mackenzie: Dreams and Dreaming, New York, (1965), p. 124.
- (24) Charles Baudouin and A. Lestchinsky, The Inner Discipline, trans. E. and C. Paul, (1924). pp. 76-77.
Later references to this work are to this edition.
- (25) Mrs. M.M.B. Eddy: 'Science and Health, Magnetism Unmasked', Boston, (1875), p. 101.
Frank Podmore: Mesmerism and Christian Science, a short history of mental healing, (1909), also discusses the relationship between Mesmerism and Christian Science.

CHAPTER TWO : HARRIET MARTINEAU'S MEDICAL HISTORY LEADING UP TO HER
CURE BY MESMERISM

Harriet Martineau's involvement in Mesmerism occurred as a development in a problematic and extraordinary medical case history.

As a child she suffered bad health: she experienced nervous and digestive disorders, and various neuroses. She described herself as "a delicate child", (Autobiography, i, p.7). Her digestive system was damaged in infancy: "I was all but starved to death in the first weeks of my life - the wetnurse being very poor, and holding onto her good place after her milk was going or gone", (*ibid*).

The damage was increased by Mrs. Martineau's insistence on forcing the baby to consume large quantities of milk in an attempt to offset the early malnutrition, when this was realised.

As a child Harriet suffered from unusually intense fears and terrors: "cursed with a beggarly nervous system", (Autobiography, i, p.8), she experienced various fantasies. For example, at the age of two she thought that the starlit sky was descending to crush her, (*ibid.*). At the same age she was petrified by the sound of feather-beds being beaten, (*ibid.*), terrified of a tall tree, (Autobiography, i, p.10), and, at the age of four, she was terrified by the sight of sunlight patterns dancing on a wall, (Autobiography, i, p.12).

At the age of five she was attracted by the thought of suicide: "I went to the kitchen to get the great carving knife, to cut my throat, but the servants were at dinner, and this put it off at that time," (Autobiography, i, p.14).

She was often in tears: "I never did pass a day without crying," (Autobiography, i, p.33).

At eight her neurosis manifested itself in an unhealthy obsession

with physical suffering, torture and execution, (Autobiography, i. p.34).

Even the usual childhood treats and delights seem to have produced extraordinary neurotic reactions in her. At Christmas she was taken annually to see a magic lantern display, but as soon as the circle of white light appeared on the wall, Harriet experienced a cold perspiration accompanied by diarrhoea, (Autobiography, i, p.12). Similar effects occurred when she was taken to see 'Mr. Drummond's Phantasmagoria', (Autobiography, i, p.15); at this time she was four or five.

These neuroses - the fears, the constant crying - may well have been due to the fact that she was deprived of love. In her Autobiography, i, she made the following significant statements :-

My parents knew nothing of all this ... I doubt whether they ever had the slightest idea of my miseries. It seems to me now that a little closer observation would have shown them the causes of the bad health and fitful temper which gave them so much anxiety on my account; and I am sure that a little more of the cheerful tenderness which was in those days thought bad for children, would have saved me from my worst faults, and from a world of suffering", (p.9);

I had no self respect, and an unbounded need of approbation and affection, (p.15);

I really think, if I had once conceived that anybody cared for me, nearly all the sins and sorrows of my anxious childhood would have been spared me, (p.23, of herself at seven);

... a little more sympathy and moral support would have spared me and others a hideous amount of fault and suffering, (p. 33, of herself aged eight).

Certainly she believed that her mother was unsympathetic towards her. At the age of fifteen, Harriet openly accused Mrs. Martineau of unfairly favouring her elder sister Rachel, (1800 - 1878). She told her mother that, "she always did agree with Rachel against me," (p.66).

Some of her biographers attribute her neuroses to a loveless childhood. Mrs. Bosanquet sees the basis of all these early sufferings in the fact that, "she was unappreciated, because, under her mother's rule, there was no chance for any growth of healthy self respect in Harriet's sensitive nature. She could oppose no effective resistance to the constant suggestion of her inferiority," (T. Bosanquet, p.12).

The two earliest biographers, Mrs. Chapman and Mrs. Miller, both blamed Mrs. Martineau. Mrs. Chapman asserted: "The feeble, humble, grandly endowed child was alternately neglected and tormented, and all her welfare and happiness sacrificed by the high-spirited, clever, conscientious mother, whose sense of duty far outstripped her power of sympathy", ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p.142).

Mrs. Miller wrote: "Her mother's temper and character were largely responsible for what Harriet calls her 'habit of misery' during childhood" (F.F. Miller, p.4).

However, Harriet's brother, the Unitarian minister and philosopher James Martineau, (1805-1900), was later anxious to state that, on the contrary, Harriet's suggestions of a loveless childhood and an unsympathetic mother were totally unfounded.(1)

Apart from her digestive and nervous disorders and neuroses, Harriet suffered severe deficiencies of the senses. She wrote: "I never had the sense of smell; and that of taste was therefore exceedingly imperfect," (Autobiography, i, p.10)(2)

Her vision, too, failed her on certain occasions, probably as a result of nervous excitement. She described two instances of this - one, when, aged nine, she was unable to see the Comet of 1811 which the family was watching, (Autobiography, i, pp. 45-46; Letters on the Laws etc. pp. 161-162), and another when, aged ten, she was unable to perceive the sea at Tynemouth, although it was directly before her, (Autobiography, i. p.45; Letters on the Laws etc. pp. 160-161).

Harriet spoke of herself at the age of thirteen, as follows :

My health was bad ... It was a depressed and wrangling life ... the great calamity of my deafness was now opening upon me; and that would have been quite enough for youthful fortitude, without the constant indigestion, languour, and muscular weakness which made life a burden to me, (Autobiography, i, p.53).

Harriet began to go deaf at the early age of twelve. By the age of twenty she had become almost totally bereft of hearing, (Autobiography, i, pp. 53-59). It was then that she had to resort to the use of an ear-trumpet. This device became her constant companion, and its use during conversation one of her most distinguishing characteristics.(3)

If deafness itself were not bad enough, as it encroached upon her Harriet had to witness the cruelty of her family, who, at the arrival of a deaf relative, callously exclaimed: "What shall we do?" "We shall be as hoarse as ravens all day," (Autobiography, i, p.59), while one of her brothers very kindly hoped that, if Harriet did become totally deaf, she would never make herself, "so irksome and absurd" as a certain Miss N-- whom he had recently met, (Autobiography, i, p.56).

Harriet therefore had to cope with an unsympathetic attitude to her deafness on the part of her family, as well as experiencing the frustrations, the limitations, the anguish and the loneliness of a world of almost total silence in which conversation was arduous and the sheer joy of hearing sounds was severely restricted: her apprehension of music, for example, was reduced to the mere sensing of vibration. She recorded that she was only able to 'hear' a musical box by placing it on her head, "while unable to hear any but confused sounds by the ear", (Letters on the Laws etc. p. 135).

At this period of her life Harriet suffered several emotional and domestic crises which accentuated her neurosis, increasing her vulnerability to physical illness: her brother Thomas died in 1824, aged only twenty-nine; her father's business suffered during the economic difficulties of the early 1820's; her father himself died in 1825, leaving the family in

dire financial straits, and finally her betrothed - John Hugh Worthington, a student friend of her brother James at Manchester New College - became insane and died in May, 1827, (Autobiography, i, pp. 98 - 100).

Throughout 1827, Harriet was suffering pain nightly, (Autobiography i, p. 102), and went to Newcastle to be treated by her brother-in-law, Dr. Greenhow. (4). Mrs. Miller describes this illness as "an affection of the liver and stomach," (F. F. Miller, p.58).

Harriet was seriously ill again in 1832-1833, with inflammation of the liver, (Autobiography, i, p.132); when literary success came to her, overwork took its toll, as J. C. Nevill describes:

All this, as was only to be expected, began to react upon her nerves. Within the space of two years and a half she had written and published thirty-six volumes of her Political Economy, Taxation and Poor Law books, (5), and, besides systematically overworking, she had kept late hours ... so that by the time the last of her series was completed she was once again on the brink of physical collapse," (J.C. Nevill, pp. 53-54).

However, she was by no means an invalid at this stage. On the contrary, in 1834-1836 when she visited America, she was of the opinion that :

The general bad health of American women was ... due to lack of fresh air and hard exercise. Addicted herself to twenty or thirty mile stretches over the English hills, she could not suffer gladly the complacency of women who were not ashamed to confess that they could not walk a mile, (T. Bosanquet, p.86).

Harriet continued to drive herself to work. J. C. Nevill states that in 1837: "... the last of the six volumes of the two American books (6) ... left Harriet tired out in mind and body, and vaguely threatened by a return of her former ill-health. But she was given no interval of rest." (J. C. Nevill, p.66).

In 1839 she was travelling in Italy when pains in her back and legs culminated in a complete collapse diagnosed as the result of uterine displacement and tumour," (Autobiography, i, p.437). The diagnosis was, in the circumstances, amazingly accurate. As R. K. Webb states: "A Venetian physician, consulted but not permitted to examine her, from a

description of her symptoms at once concluded that the difficulty was prolapse of the uterus and polypous tumours," (R. K. Webb, p.193, my emphasis).

Harriet proceeded to Lucerne, but was then brought back to England. She was again placed under the care of her brother-in-law, Dr. Greenhow, at Newcastle. Greenhow agreed with the diagnosis of the Italian doctor, and in March 1840 Harriet was taken to lodgings in Tynemouth, "where she settled down with entire resignation to the life of a permanent invalid," (T. Bosanquet, p.132).

Two years after the beginning of her illness she saw the famous gynaecologist, Sir Charles Clarke, (7), who had nothing to add to Greenhow's diagnosis and treatment of her. Harriet at once pronounced that she had been declared 'incurable'.(8).

It was at this time, therefore, that, believing herself to be near death, she attempted to crush the possibility of any biographies being produced should she die, by writing to all her correspondents demanding that they destroy or return all the letters which she had ever sent them. This request angered, distressed, and alienated many who had previously respected her, and their compliance was not general.(9).

During this period of her illness she continued to write when able to do so, producing The Hour and the Man, (1840), and the four children's tales that constitute The Playfellow, (1841), 'The Settlers at Home', 'The Peasant and the Prince', 'Feats on the Fiord', and 'The Crofton Boys'.

It is interesting, in view of what followed, that Harriet contemplated both phrenology and Mesmerism at this stage.(10)

Harriet's lodgings at Tynemouth, in the house of a Mrs. Halliday in Front Street, are described in the Autobiography, i, p. 444. The room was small, reached by a short flight of steps from the ground floor. It was later enlarged by the addition of a room in an adjoining house, with a door cut between, (A. Jameson, Letters etc., pp. 207 and 210).

Here Harriet grew bulbs in a flower box, (Life in the Sick Room, pp. 57-58), and occupied her time with correspondence and needlework, especially netting and worsted work, (A. Jameson, Letters etc., p.210). She read a great deal: books of voyages and travel, books by 'Christopher North', (the pseudonym of poet and essayist John Wilson, 1785-1854) and Goethe, (Life in the Sick Room, pp. 59-60, 212-217). She read George Sand's novel Consuelo, (1842), Bulwer Lytton's Zanoni, (1842), and the newspapers, especially The Spectator, (A. Jameson, Letters etc. pp.209-210, 215-216).

On the wall Harriet had a print of the painting 'Christus Consolator', by Ary Scheffer, (1795-1858), from which she evidently gained some comfort; the painting depicts Christ as healer of the brokenhearted and deliverer of the captive. Harriet wrote of it:

If such a picture as the Christus Consolator of Scheffer be within view of the sick couch ... it may well be a cause of wonder, almost amounting to alarm, to those who, not having needed, have never felt its power, (Life in the Sick Room, p.158).

Harriet had also been given a telescope on a brass stand by a friend, Mrs. Reid, and through this she spent a great deal of time looking at the fine view across the Tyne to South Shields from her window. This remarkable, panoramic view is depicted in an engraving printed in the Autobiography, i, (opposite p. 445). Harriet looked out at the downs and the hollow that led to a ruined priory, at the harbour and the ships on the river, the opposite bank of the Tyne, the beaches and rocks, and people on the heath, (Life in the Sick Room, pp. 46-48). She watched the garden, the coast in winter, storms, the passing of the seasons, and the wildlife - larks, primroses, warblers, yellow butterflies, and bees, (Life in the Sick Room pp. 54-57); she saw flag-poles and ships, and children at play, (Life in the Sick Room, pp. 178 - 179, 181).

Harriet was now taking morphine regularly, though in doses too small for addiction. Mrs. Jameson wrote to Lady Byron in 1842: "Opiates, administered in a particular way, enable her to bear the pain and nervous distress. She says that but for these blessed opiates she must have been long ago - 'crazy or dead'", (A. Jameson, Letters etc., p. 208).

Sir Charles Clarke suggested an iodine ointment, which she refused to use. Dr. Greenhow substituted an iodine tonic, which helped her. Her plight was aggravated by secondary ailments - severe digestive troubles, and an abscess in the throat, (R. K. Webb, p. 195).

Finally, in 1842, her condition became so bad that she ceased going out into her garden. Due to the iodine dosage, her health improved in the autumn of 1843. She received visitors again, and took up needlework again.

In R. K. Webb's view, although Harriet was ill, her case was not as critical as it appeared, despite her dramatic pronouncements to Mrs. Jameson, who wrote to Lady Byron: "She thinks it will be decided in a week or two whether her life will be terminated soon, or whether she may go on as now for some years before the disease assumes a malignant aspect," and, "... she said that tho' resigned to live on thus, she would prefer to die, and that it would be to her unspeakable happiness and relief to know that a crisis was at hand - however painful - and her time limited," (A. Jameson, Letters etc. pp. 208, 211-212).

James Martineau also seemed to have been under the impression that his sister was dying; Macready wrote in his diary on June 7th, 1841: "Mr. James Martineau called ... he told me that dear Miss Martineau was worse, and from his account I fear she is sinking ... God bless her. She will not leave many so good behind her," (Diaries, ii, p. 137).

R. K. Webb, however, believes that Harriet was exploiting the illness in quest of the image of a stoical, suffering woman. It was not that she yearned for pity, but that she regarded physical suffering as

a desirable form of martyrdom. Webb supports his view by asserting Dr. Greenhow's insistence that he knew that Harriet would eventually recover, and that he told her this. (The controversy between Harriet and Greenhow is discussed in Chapter 3). Webb interprets Greenhow's attitude as one of general belief that Harriet would recover, rather than as a physician's comforting words in a case which he knew to be fatal. In view of this it would seem that Harriet was almost wilfully critically ill when she insisted: "My kind and vigilant medical friend avowed... that he found himself compelled to give up all hope of affecting the disease."(11).

Moreover, Webb sees a doctrine of stoicism under persecution and pain explored throughout The Playfellow tales that Harriet was then engaged in writing, (R.K. Webb, pp. 197-205).

Cecil Woodham-Smith, on the other hand, observing of Harriet that, "six years in bed had brought her strength,"(12), sees neither self-indulgence nor an image of idealistic stoicism as the reason for Harriet's prolonged period as an invalid. Associating her with other Victorians who spent extraordinarily lengthy periods of their lives bed-ridden, (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Florence Nightingale and Charles Darwin), she continues:

And yet I do not think any of these people was looking only for an escape. They were, I believe, looking for something very different, a climate in which they could work. Work was their object, work not self. And most important of all, they all belonged to a rare class of human being, who can flourish only in silence and solitude, (p. 246).

On September 15th, 1843, in the fifth year of her illness and confinement at Tynemouth, Harriet began to contemplate a work consisting of essays from the sick room. These were written in secret and published anonymously in December 1843 as Life in the Sick Room: Essays by an Invalid, a work which, as has become clear, provides much information about the sick-room period of Harriet's life.(13).

For some time several of Harriet's friends had been suggesting mesmeric treatment. Though she then knew little about the subject, Harriet was

not unacquainted with either Mesmerism or phrenology. As we have seen, she thought of both subjects during the sick-room period, and she herself stated that two phrenological casts of her head were taken during her life-time, one in 1853, but one as early as 1833, (Autobiography, i, p.294), apart from the death-mask and cast of her left hand now in the Armitt Library, Ambleside, (now part of the Ambleside Library). She discussed phrenology in the context of deafness, and recorded the curious request of a surgeon, Mr. Toynbee, that she should leave him her ears in her will, (Autobiography, i, p. 294-298). She was examined by phrenologists several times, (Autobiography, i, p.296),(14), and even attended a phrenological lecture-class given by a Mr. Holm, in the company of Rammohun Roy and the Duke of Somerset, (Autobiography, i, p.298).(15)

Harriet had also encountered phrenology in Boston while on her American tour of 1834-1836. Discussing the public fickleness concerning 'crazes', she wrote: "When Spurzheim was in America, the great mass of society became phrenologists in a day, wherever he appeared, "but, when spiritualism came to their notice, the public would be absorbed by it.

However:

If a phrenological lecturer from Paris, London or Edinburgh should go to Boston, the superficial, visible portion of the public would wheel round once more ... Before five years are out, however, the lecturer will find himself superseded by some professor of animal magnetism."(16)

Harriet had already met Dr. John Elliotson, the leading English mesmerist, at a dinner party given by the Macreadys.(17) When her mesmeric 'cure' was established, it was Elliotson who publicised it, supporting Harriet, in the pages of The Zoist, the mesmeric quarterly founded by him. A further connection with Elliotson was that his patrons, Lord and Lady Goldsmid,(18), had a governess, a Miss Rankin, who was a cousin and close friend of Harriet's and herself a patient of Elliotson. Interestingly, she had accompanied Harriet on the European tour of

1839 when Harriet had collapsed and been brought back to England to begin her life as an invalid, ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p.568).

During the period in the sick-room, Harriet heard a great deal more about Mesmerism. Her youngest sister, Ellen, (1811-1889), wife of a surgeon, Alfred Higginson, informed Harriet in May 1844 that her husband had been deeply impressed by the ability of Mesmerism to render patients insensible to pain - especially during surgical operations, (Autobiography, i, p. 473).(19). Friends like Mr. and Mrs. Basil Montagu informed her of the wonderful effects that Mesmerism had had on a girl named Ann Vials, (20), whose course of treatment had been administered by the Montagus' friend, Henry George Atkinson. In addition, Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, another authority on Mesmerism, (see Chapters 7 and 8), urged her to travel to Paris to consult a French somnambule, a disciple of Mesmer, (Autobiography, i, p. 472).

Harriet was at first reluctant. Although she claimed: "I had long been entirely convinced of the truth of the insight of somnambules", (Autobiography, i, p. 472), she was now far too ill to travel from Tynemouth, and she knew that some of her family - particularly her mother - would oppose any such experiment.

However, Dr. Greenhow himself finally suggested that she should give Mesmerism a try, (Autobiography, i, p.473), and Harriet agreed. Greenhow had himself attended a lecture and demonstration by the well-known phrenologist and mesmerist, Spencer Timothy Hall,(21), and had even allowed himself to be mesmerised.

On 22nd June, 1844, therefore, Spencer Hall came to treat Harriet for the first time. He made mesmeric 'passes' over her, from the forehead to the back of the head, and within twenty minutes Harriet saw the room filled with a ghostly haze into which all the solid objects seemed to dissolve and become surrounded by phosphorescent light. Afterwards she felt hot, oppressed and sick, but then a feeling of relief and

lightness succeeded her discomfort.

Hall was tired the following day, and on the third day he was too ill to come at all. Harriet, counting on his visit, had been hoping to avoid taking her afternoon opiate, so she told her maid Margaret to imitate the passes she had seen Hall make. The maid began to make the passes, and soon Harriet saw the solid objects engulfed in shadow and the phosphoric lights, and a feeling of coolness and ease spread through her body. When he saw the good effects of the maid's mesmerizing, Hall urged her to continue, and the treatment proceeded in this way until September 6th, Harriet herself directing the passes from a manual of practical instruction, Deleuze's Instruction pratique sur le magnétisme animal. (22) She ceased taking opiates, and began to think in terms of a complete recovery, (Letters on Mesmerism, pp. 7-11).

Harriet now enquired about the possibility of obtaining a 'course' of mesmeric treatment. The Basil Montagus consulted Henry George Atkinson, who recommended a young widow, Mrs. Montague Wynard, (23), who took up residence with Harriet in Tynemouth. Under her treatment and Atkinson's written advice, Harriet made progress until she felt quite well by November. As she herself wrote: "At the end of four months, I was, as far as my own feelings could be any warrant, quite well," (Letters on Mesmerism, p.6).

She lived for another thirty-two years.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

- (1) James Martineau published a letter entitled 'The Early Days of Harriet Martineau' in The Daily News, Dec. 30th, 1884, (p. 3), in which he refuted his sister's allegations, attributing any harshness of his parents to their not knowing the extent of Harriet's ill-health, and to their inheritance of a family tradition of Unitarian austerity.

Harriet's critical view of her mother may well have been coloured by Mrs. Martineau's later hostility to the mesmeric cure; James Martineau wrote to his cousin, Mrs. Turner, on Jan. 7th, 1885: "I do not think that anyone but myself ... can appreciate the extent to which Harriet's ultimate mood and estimates of things transformed and distorted her seeming memories of early life," James Drummond and C. B. Upton: The Life and Letters of James Martineau, (1902), i, p.8.

Further references to the latter work will be made to 'Life etc. of J. Martineau'.

- (2) In Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), which Harriet wrote in collaboration with H. G. Atkinson, she said: "As you know, I have never had the sense of smell (except once for a few hours), nor therefore much sense of taste; and before I was twenty I had lost the greater part of my hearing," (p.68).

Later, she referred to the only food which she ever tasted - a leg of mutton; anticipating future culinary delights, she was disappointed when, at "a great late dinner" that evening, she was again without a sense of taste:

"I might have spared my anticipation; for by that time, everything on my plate had become as tasteless as ever," (p.122).
Never again did she taste anything.

Further quotations from this work are cited as 'Letters on the Laws etc.'

Mrs. Jameson wrote of Harriet to Lady Byron in 1842:

"She never heard the voice of thunder, nor inhaled the fragrance of the rose, nor tasted strawberries and cream,"

Anna Jameson: Letters and Friendships, 1812-1860, ed. Mrs. Steuart Erskine, (1915), p.210. This work will in future be cited as A. Jameson: Letters etc.

- (3) Harriet's initial use of the ear-trumpet is described in the Autobiography, i, p.95.

Carlyle commented that one had to address Harriet, "through an ear-trumpet, without which she was totally deaf," Reminiscences, (1881), Everyman edtn. (1932), p.117.

The ear-trumpet attracted unusual attention. It inspired Dr. Flint's Sonnet to Miss H. Martineau's ear trumpet, which contained the following adulatory lines :-

Thrice precious tube! thou faithful voice-conveyor
Through thy accomplished mistress' outward ear
To that within ...
Through thee, quick, clear and sweet response I win
From more than Delphic oracle within.
For spirits o'er the vasty deep I call
Through thee, (Autobiography, ii, P. 261)

James Payn, (1830-1898), the poet and novelist, visited Harriet in later years and observed: "In the porch stood Miss Martineau ... with a smile on her kindly face and her trumpet at her ear," Some Literary Recollections, (1884), p.101. He continued of his visit:

I had by that time got so well accustomed to her ear-trumpet that I began to look upon it as a part of herself. It was lying on the table a good distance away from her, and, having some remark to make to her, I inadvertently expressed it to the instrument instead of her ear. Heavens, how we laughed! She had a very keen sense of fun, (p. 108).

Payn was evidently fascinated by the ear-trumpet; he also related the story of Harriet, the champion of human rights and liberty, striding through a field owned by a wealthy landowner who was disputing the public right of way and had released a bull into the field to deter entry. Harriet, however, stood her ground,

and Payn observed that the bull, "whether from astonishment at her presumption, or terror of the ear-trumpet, left her alone", (p.111).

He also noted that Robert Chambers, (1802-1871), the Edinburgh publisher, "used to contend that Miss Martineau never wanted her ear-trumpet at all, not because she could hear without it, but because she did not care to hear what anybody had to tell her," (p.111).

William Charles Macready, (1793-1873), the actor, was visited on Nov. 20th 1839, by the engraver, Thomas Landseer, (1795-1880), brother of the painter Sir Edwin Landseer. Thomas Landseer was, like Harriet, extremely deaf. Macready wrote: "I promised to write to Miss Martineau about an ear-trumpet," The Diaries of Macready, 1833-51, ed. William Toynbee, (1912), ii, p.31.

A few days later, on Dec. 1st, 1839, Landseer returned, and Macready wrote that he "was delighted to produce the trumpet to him; gave him Miss Martineau's letter to read; his experiment of the trumpet was very successful," (Diaries, ii, p.33).

This work will in future be cited as Diaries.

Finally, Frances Anne ("Fanny") Kemble, (1809-1893), the actress, met Harriet in Philadelphia in 1834, and wrote:

Her deafness is a serious bar to her enjoyment of society, and some drawback to the pleasure of conversing with her. For as a man observed to me last night, 'One feels so like a fool, saying, "How do you do?" through a speaking-trumpet in the middle of a drawing room', Records of Later Life (1882), i, p. 17.

- (4) Dr. T. M. Greenhow married Harriet's eldest sister, Elizabeth, (1794- 1850).
- (5) J. C. Nevill's reference is to Illustrations of Political Economy, which appeared in nine successive volumes in 1832, 1833 and 1834, Poor Laws and Paupers, (1833 and 1834), and Illustrations of Taxation, (1834).
- (6) The two 'American books' were Society in America, (1837), and

Retrospect of Western Travel, (1838). Both appeared in editions of three volumes.

- (7) Sir Charles Mansfield Clarke, (1782-1857), began to specialise in midwifery in 1804, lecturing on the subject until 1821. He became physician to Queen Adelaide, (1792-1849), consort of William IV, (1765-1837), in 1830, and received a baronetcy in 1831. His brother Dr. John Clarke, (1761-1815), also specialised in women's diseases.
- (8) Mrs. Bosanquet quotes a letter of Harriet's to Mrs. Roebuck on p. 243 of her book. Harriet wrote: "... it will have occurred to you before this that I should not have used the word 'incurable' against authority. I did see a London physician half a year since; and that was his word." Mrs. Bosanquet fails to specify a precise source or date, except to say that the letter was written "early in 1842."
- (9) Thomas Carlyle commented on Harriet's demand:

Harriet, taking the sublime terror 'that her letters might be laid hold of by improper parties in future generations' and demanding them all back that she herself might burn them, produced ... a complete cessation. We never quarrelled with her in the least ... but never had more to do with her or say to her," Reminiscences, (1881), Everyman edtn., (1932), p.12

Mrs. Jameson wrote to Harriet about her demand, referring to:

... the pain and astonishment I felt on reading it ... Are you aware of what you are doing, of the mischief that might arise out of such principles as you assert? It appears to me that you are giving the most deadly blow to mutual confidence, to what you call freedom of speech, that ever yet was given ... if, in this discrimination, I am to have no right of judgement whatever, then I am not fit to be trusted in anything, nor fit to be yours nor any lady's friend, A. Jameson, Letters etc., pp. 222-223.

Harriet's brother James refused to comply with her demand. He wrote :

Against this severe exaction I had remonstrated in vain ... The only option left to me was, to cancel the old letters, or to receive no new ones. I looked over my stores, and made my choice with sadness, but with decision," Life etc. of J. Martineau, i, p. 119.

Harriet discussed the problems of publishing the letters of deceased

persons, the privacy of conversation in the sick room, and intrusion into the lives of invalids, in Life in the Sick Room, (1844), p. 91. She observed that the privacy "of epistolary correspondence ... is constantly and deliberately violated," and described the only way in which to avoid this: "Some call in their own letters; - a painful process, both to writer and receivers," (p.92), and she concluded that biographies should be sacrificed if they involve exploiting the sacred privacy of intimate correspondence, (p. 93).

This work will in future be referred to as Life in the Sick Room.

- (10) She wrote: "As for the discoveries or quackeries of the time ... how clear is the collateral good, whatever may be the express failure?" (Life in the Sick Room, p. 82).

Referring to phrenology, she wrote that, although some laugh, one cannot but, "admit that much knowledge of the structure of the brain ... has issued from the pursuit," (ibid.)

And of Mesmerism:

This Mesmerism again: who believes that it could be revived, again and again, at intervals of centuries, if there were not something in it? Who looks back upon the mass of strange but authenticated historical narratives, which might be explained by this agent, and looks, at the same time, into our dense ignorance of the structure and functions of the nervous system, and will dare to say that there is nothing in it? Whatever quackery and imposture may be connected with it, however its pretensions may be falsified, it seems impossible but that some new insight must be obtained by its means, into the powers of our mysterious frame, (ibid).

Mrs. Jameson wrote to Lady Byron of one of her visits to Harriet's sick room: "The conversation has been extremely amusing - principally on Somnambulism; she has faith in all its marvels - Clairvoyance - and all!" (A. Jameson, Letters etc., p. 213).

- (11) Harriet Martineau: Letters on Mesmerism, (1845), p. 4. Further references are to this edition. The work is fully discussed in Chapter 3.

- (12) Cecil Woodham-Smith: 'They Stayed in Bed', The Listener, Vol. 55, Feb. 16, 1956, p. 245.
- (13) This work originally included a controversial chapter on euthanasia, which was ultimately omitted. Towards the end of her life, on Nov. 19th 1872, Harriet wrote to H. G. Atkinson:

You will feel at once how earnestly I must be longing for death ... But I do wish it was permitted to us to judge for ourselves a little how long we ought to carry on the task which we never desired and could not refuse, and how soon we may fairly relieve our comrades from the burden of taking care of us. I wonder whether the chapter I wrote about this for the 'Sick Room' book will ever see the light ... I let it be omitted from that book because it might perhaps injure the impression of the rest of the volume, (F.F. Miller, p. 123).

Mrs. Miller added the following note: "I have made such enquiries as I could (of one of Miss Martineau's executors and others), but can get no tidings of this missing chapter on Euthanasia."

The existence of such a chapter would seem to be supported by Harriet's 'preference for death' as confided to Mrs. Jameson. If R. K. Webb is right, Harriet's desire for an image of stoicism might well have allowed her to pronounce exaggeratedly to Mrs. Jameson, while stopping short of the fully-fledged advocacy of euthanasia which was, it seems, suppressed in Life in the Sick Room.

- (14) The taking of phrenological casts implies an interest in the subject, although not, perhaps, an obsession. At the time such examinations were not unusual. Both George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë submitted to phrenological analysis. Charles Bray wrote of himself and George Eliot:

At that time we were both very much interested in phrenology, and in 1844 she had a cast taken of her head ... Miss Evans's head was a very large one ... George Combe, on first seeing the cast, took it for a man's, The Phrenological Magazine, ed. A. T. Story, vol. 1, (1881), p. 58.

Winifred Gérin writes of Charlotte Brontë: "During her visit to London in May - June 1851, Charlotte went with George Smith to

a phrenologist then much in vogue, Dr. J. P. Browne, to have her 'talents and disposition' estimated", Charlotte Bronte, the Evolution of Genius, (1967), p. 576; the analysis by Browne follows, pp. 576-578.

- (15) Rammohun Roy was an Indian Rajah, a famous convert to Christianity who visited London in 1831, (R. K. Webb, p. 340). Harriet first saw him at the Unitarian May Meeting of that year, (Autobiography, i, p. 118).

The Duke of Somerset at the time was Edward Adolphus Seymour, 11th Duke of Somerset, (1775-1855).

- (16) Harriet Martineau: Retrospect of Western Travel, (1838), ii, pp.188-189.

- (17) Macready wrote on March 27th, 1839: "Miss Martineau ... Dr. Elliotson ... dined with us; an agreeable day," (Diaries, i, p. 504).

Other guests at this function included Carlyle, Browning and Darwin.

It seems that Harriet and Elliotson narrowly missed meeting each other at Macready's as early as Feb. 2nd, 1838, when Macready wrote: "Miss Martineau called, and sat a short time. Dr. Elliotson called, thought me much better," (Diaries, i, p. 442).

- (18) Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, (1778-1859), was a Jewish philanthropist and financier actively involved in the campaign for Jewish emancipation, and assisting in the foundation of University College in 1825. He also worked with Elizabeth Fry for the reform of the penal code and for prison-improvement. He was created a Baronet in 1841, the first Jew ever to be so honoured.

Lady Goldsmid, his wife, was his cousin Isabel Goldsmid, whom he married in 1804.

- (19) Accounts of operations performed painlessly under Mesmerism abounded, for example, the Rev. George Sandby : Mesmerism and its Opponents (1848), pp. 51-54, and Account of a Case of Successful amputation of the thigh during the mesmeric state, without the knowledge of the patient, (1842), by W. Topham and W. S. Ward, (originally a lecture read to the Royal and Chirurgical Society on Nov. 22nd 1842).

The Mesmerist, a Journal of Vital Magnetism, published a report on surgical operations performed during mesmeric sleep, (no. 7, June 24th, 1843, p. 49).

Perhaps the most important work relating to the subject was Dr. Elliotson's Numerous cases of surgical operations without pain in the mesmeric state, (1843).

Harriet Martineau herself wrote: "A surgeon, a near relative of mine, had, to his own astonishment, operated on a person in the mesmeric sleep without causing pain," (Letters on Mesmerism, p. 6).

- (20) Basil Montagu, (1770-1851), miscellaneous writer and philanthropist, was the illegitimate son of the 4th Earl of Sandwich. He entered the legal profession in 1789. His campaign against hanging began in about 1809. He also worked for Jewish emancipation. He was therefore among the socially active of the mesmeric enthusiasts.

Mrs. Basil Montagu was, at this time, Montagu's third wife, *She was formerly* Mrs. Thomas Skepper, (née Benson), who knew Burns in her youth, fascinated Edward Irving, and became a correspondent of Carlyle's.

The Zoist published an article, "On Mr. Basil Montagu, his efforts to abolish hanging," (Vol. 1., Mar. 1843 - Jan. 1844, p. 285), and reproduced his portrait, (opposite p. 277).

Ann Vials, (b. 1821), was a celebrated case of mesmeric cure. Harriet wrote: "Mr. and Mrs. Basil Montagu, who, supposing me to be an unbeliever, yet related to me the case of Ann Vials," (Letters on Mesmerism, p. 6).

The Rev. George Sandby related the events of the case in detail: Ann Vials caught a terminal disease from nursing her dying mother, and the disease, infecting her arm, necessitated an amputation in 1841, no medical attention proving effective. Subsequently, Ann suffered fits and other maladies, and the stump of her arm was seen to move uncontrollably. As her condition worsened,

the Basil Montagus, hearing of her plight, befriended her and interested H. G. Atkinson in her case. He began to mesmerise her in May 1842, and she experienced a rapid improvement, (Mesmerism and its opponents, 1848, pp. 123-133).

H. G. Atkinson wrote of her:

Ann Vials generally felt as if her arm were still attached to the stump; and by mesmerizing over the stump, I could make her feel as if the hand closed, or only two fingers or the thumb ... Ann Vials may truly be said to be haunted by the ghost of her own arm, (Letters on the Laws, etc. p. 136).

- (21) Spencer Timothy Hall, (1812-1885), originally a weaver, then a printer. He wrote verse, and publicly spoke in defence of phrenology. He was the first honorary secretary of the Sheffield Phrenological Society, and, later, an honorary member of the Phrenological Society of Glasgow.

In 1844, he lectured on Mesmerism in Sunderland, performing mesmeric experiments on two boys who travelled with him and four youths from the area. He proceeded to South Shields and Newcastle, so was near at hand to treat Harriet in Tynemouth.

He wrote Mesmeric Experiences, (1845), recording Harriet's case, (pp. 63-75). He was also editor of the short-lived periodical The Phreno-Magnet and Mirror of Nature, (1843), which published his portrait on its frontispiece, and contained accounts of his phrenomagnetic lectures at Manchester in March 1843, (pp. 46-52), his experiments at Liverpool in April 1843, (pp. 83-86), lectures at Chester, (p. 248), and Derby, (pp. 334-342).

The Phrenological Magazine, Vol.1, (1885), published an obituary article on Dr. Spencer T. Hall, (June 1885, pp. 259-260) in which it stated: "He was a great believer in the efficacy of Mesmerism from a medical point of view. His most illustrious patient was Harriet Martineau, whom he cured of a long-standing ailment," (p. 259).

Finally, the Mesmerist, a journal of vital magnetism,

published a report on Spencer Hall's lectures and mesmeric sessions at Freemason's Tavern, (no. 4, June 3rd, 1843, pp. 30-32).

- (22) There were many such manuals of practical mesmeric instruction. Another was A Practical Manual of Animal Magnetism, containing an exposition of the methods employed in producing the magnetic phenomenon, (1843), a translation by D. Spiller, M.D., of a manual by Alphonse Teste, (b. 1808), the French physician and medical writer.

Deleuze's Instruction pratique sur le magnétisme animal, Paris, (1825), was published in England in 1837 as Practical Instruction in Animal Magnetism, trans. Thomas C. Hartshorn. This is the guide that Harriet's maid used. It is an indication of the continuing influence of French Mesmerism, despite the reaction against it earlier in the century, that mesmerists like Hall and H. G. Atkinson recommended the use of these manuals, which were translations of French works. Again, William Long, in Animal Magnetism or Mesmerism, its history etc. New York, (1844), quoted Deleuze' suggested techniques (pp. 72-75).

Joseph Philippe Francois Deleuze, (1753-1835), was a naturalist and wrote numerous scientific works.

- (23) Mrs. Montague Wynard.

The name has been given various spellings. Jane Welsh Carlyle called her Mrs. 'Winyard', Letters and Memorials, ed. J.A. Froude, (1883), ii, p.25; in one letter, Wordsworth gave her name two different spellings - 'Winyard', and 'Wynyard', Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, 'The Later Years', iii, 1841-1850, (1939), p. 1244; Victoria Glendinning calls her 'Wynyard' in 'Tales of 19th^{Century} Neurosis', Times Literary Supplement, no. 3813, April 4th, 1975, p. 352.

Mrs. Wynard was the widow of a Yorkshire clergyman.

She had endured an unhappy marriage, paying her husband's debts

twice. After his death she became ill, suffering what was probably a nervous breakdown, and was herself 'cured' by Atkinson. Mrs. Wynard then mesmerised her laundress in Chatham, and the girl was apparently able to taste a bun that her mistress had eaten. When she first arrived in Tynemouth, Atkinson sent her a piece of mesmerised leather in order to put them both in 'communication', (R. K. Webb, p. 228).

CHAPTER THREE: EVENTS FOLLOWING THE 'CURE' OF 1844

That Harriet appeared to have been cured is indisputable; whether or not an actual physiological recovery had occurred is, however, another question. Furthermore, had such a recovery taken place, it remains questionable whether or not Mesmerism was responsible.

Certainly an astonishing change occurred in Harriet's life following mesmeric treatment. She had previously been confined to her couch, but, after only four months, friends who had expected to mourn her death heard instead that she was walking astonishing distances, in extraordinary conditions. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote to Mr. Westwood on Dec. 31st, 1844: "Harriet Martineau is quite well, 'trudging miles together in the snow', when the snow was, and in great spirits,"(1), and she wrote to Miss Mitford in February/March, 1846, referring to Harriet: "She ... speaks of her strength and of being able to walk fifteen miles a day," (Letters of E. B. Browning, i, p. 276).

In July, 1845, Anna Jameson was able to report: "I came back by Ambleside, where I saw Harriet Martineau looking wonderfully well, alert, full of life and spirits, walking seven or eight miles a day, and most enthusiastic about mesmerism."(2)

Only two years later, (1846-1847), Harriet made her tour of Egypt and Palestine, when she travelled incredible distances on foot, and riding camels and donkeys - often through difficult terrain. She described some of her travelling thus:

And how many scores of miles did I walk in the Desert, during those five weeks...! I have often walked from ten to fifteen miles in the noon hours, continuously, and of course at the pace of the caravan, - sometimes over an easy pebbly track, - sometimes over mountain passes, - sometimes cutting my boots to pieces on the sharp rocks; but always giving up when we came to deep sand. As for the camel-riding - I could not have conceived of any exercise being so utterly exhausting.(3)

Later she referred to an incident when the party was hit by a sand storm: "I walked about eight miles," (Eastern Life, ii, p. 231).

Referring to the eastern tour, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote to Miss

Mitford on Dec. 8th, 1847, that Harriet had been, "climbing hills and walking and riding distances," (Letters of E. B. Browning, ii, pp. 352-353).

Mrs. Chapman, referring to Harriet's expected death, wrote: "... instead of so sinking down, she rode on a camel to Mount Sinai and Petra, and on horseback to Damascus," ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 569).

It hardly needs to be stated that these activities of Harriet's following the mesmeric 'cure' are a startling contrast with the languour of the woman resigned to death in the Tynemouth sick-room.

When Harriet began to publicise her mesmeric 'cure', Dr. Greenhow published a medical report on her case, in an attempt to undermine her claims. He feared that Mesmerism would seem to have usurped orthodox medicine and that he had failed where the mesmerists Hall, Atkinson and Mrs. Wynard had succeeded. He was of course further embarrassed by his own implicit compliance in Harriet's original decision to try Mesmerism. Accordingly, therefore, he published A. Medical Report of the Case of Miss H-- M--, (1845). The report angered Harriet by suggesting that, with or without Mesmerism, she would eventually have regained her health, and that, physiologically speaking, her condition remained unchanged.

It is true that Harriet lived for another thirty-two years following the 'cure', that in 1855 she suffered further illness diagnosed by Sir Thomas Watson as heart disease, and that the gradual decline of her health towards the end of her life was attributed to this heart disease. However, following her death medical authority asserted that the earlier 'cure' was not a cure but an apparent arresting of the disease due to the movement of the tumour.

Articles debating the 'cure', and the cause of Harriet's death years later were published in the British Medical Journal in 1876 and 1877, and will be discussed shortly.

However, Mrs. Miller, ignoring this authoratitive debate, stated that the tumour of which Harriet died was not the same as that 'cured' in 1844. She wrote:

The internal tumour was ... an entirely different kind of thing ... from that which she suffered from at Tynemouth... The post-mortem examination made by her medical attendant at the request of her executors two days after she died, revealed the fact that this tumour was the true cause of all her sufferings. She never knew it herself. Relying on the statement of the eminent men whom she consulted in 1855, that it was the heart that was affected, she accepted that as her fate," (F. F. Miller, p. 220).

Mrs. Miller entirely rejected the notion that the fatal tumour was the same as that 'cured' by Mesmerism, (F.F. Miller, p. 130). She asserted that if this were so, then Greenhow and Sir Charles Clarke were both, "utterly wrong in their diagnosis of 1840," (ibid.). She stated that she read Greenhow's report and the post-mortem, and concluded: "I find that the organ ... stated to be the seat of the disease, enlargement and tumour in 1840, is described as being found 'particularly small and unaffected' after death," (ibid.).

The opinions of medical authority regarding the 'cure' and the final cause of Harriet's death are outlined as follows. As stated above, all were published in The British Medical Journal, 1876-1877:-

- i. 'The late Miss Harriet Martineau', by Sir Thomas Watson, (July 8th, 1876, p. 64).

Sir Thomas' letter aimed to disprove the allegation that Harriet was misled by medical authority. Sir Thomas maintained that he had assured Harriet in 1855 that her heart was not diseased and that her original specialist at that time, Dr. Latham, told her the same.(4) Sir Thomas also noted: "I call to mind also some curious things which I afterwards heard from Dr. Latham, respecting this lady's supposed self-cure of an internal malady by mesmerism," (p.64).

- ii. 'Termination of the Case of Miss Harriet Martineau', by M.T. Greenhow, (April 14th, 1877, p.449).

This statement, by Harriet's brother-in-law, asserted that the abdominal tumour did not disappear following the mesmeric treatment.

- iii. 'The late Miss Harriet Martineau', by Sir Thomas Watson, (April 21st 1877, p. 496).

In his second letter, Sir Thomas stated that Dr. Latham told him that after the proclamation of the so-called 'mesmeric cure', the tumour remained "as large and palpable as ever." Dr. Latham conjectured that it had shifted its position, and the relief from pain then experienced by Harriet should be attributed to that. Sir Thomas also asserted that Dr. Greenhow's statement, (ii above), supported Dr. Latham's conjectures.

- iv. 'The Case of Miss Harriet Martineau', by W. Moore King, (May 5th, 1877, p. 550).

Moore King conducted the post-mortem examination, and had been in attendance on Harriet since 1871. He stated that her heart was weak, but not dangerously so. He was not allowed to make a thorough examination of the abdomen during the patient's life-time, but was sure that it contained a large tumour.

Harriet had told him that she believed this swelling to be due to displacement of all the other organs by the enlargement of the heart. At that time she had become dependent upon opium for the relief of the pain, (5); the post-mortem examination revealed the presence of a large tumour, and it was this that had indeed displaced several of the abdominal organs, and reduced the cavity of the thorax. Death, however, was due to heart-failure following weakening of the heart during a period of eighteen months.

- v. 'Remarks on the Case of Miss Martineau', by T. Spencer Wells, (May 5th, 1877, p. 543).

Sir Spencer Wells, (1818-1897), ^{perfector of} ovariectomy and the originator of modern abdominal surgery, at the request of Harriet's other brother-in-law, the surgeon Alfred Higginson, outlined the entire medical



history to the Clinical Society of London, in April, 1877.

He described the slow-growing dermoid cyst as ovarian, stating that it was the same tumour observed by Dr. Greenhow and Sir Charles Clarke at Tynemouth, but that it had been incorrectly diagnosed as uterine. The tumour moved from a painful nerve centre in the pelvic area into the abdomen, with a consequent temporary disappearance of pain, which happened by chance to coincide with mesmeric treatment.

The tumour grew slowly and only became apparent in 1855, when Harriet believed her symptoms to imply heart-disease, and consulted Dr. Latham and Sir Thomas Watson about them. Spencer Wells noted that at the time, Sir Thomas did record in his notebook a slight irregularity of heart-action, and a large tumour, (the only reference to it during Harriet's life-time).

After 1855, the tumour did not greatly increase for twenty-one years, but during this period Harriet frequently suffered pain which she believed to be due to heart-disease, (despite her doctor's assurances to the contrary), and that it was the tumour that reasserted itself at the end of her life, and of which she finally died.

J. C. Nevill speculates that, in May 1855, Harriet may in fact have believed the assurances of her physicians that her heart was sound; that she knew her suffering at that time to be due to 'a' tumour which had not been cured, (though she would have believed it to be uterine, in accordance with the original diagnosis of 1844, and not abdominal as the post-mortem conclusively established), and that she could not, despite this, admit that the tumour was still present, because this would be to admit that the 'cure' by Mesmerism had been false, (J. C. Nevill, pp. 120-121). To support this argument, J. C. Nevill notes that, significantly, there was no resort to Mesmerism on Harriet's part at the end of her life when she was nearing death, her interest - or belief - in it having apparently evaporated.

This may all be true - that Harriet realised her 'cure' of 1844 to have been false. However, it cannot be deduced from this that her aim was to conceal the 'failure' of the cure. J. C. Nevill himself notes, (p. 119), that in her letters to Atkinson written towards the end of her life, she expressed the desire to die, (as was noted too in Chapter 1), which may have been due to her suffering and pain,(6), and it is therefore probable that, in the light of this 'death-wish', she would not have wanted to survive by Mesmerism or any other curative means.

This is not the place to discuss the medical aspects of Mesmerism and hypnosis. However, it is interesting to note that, despite the dismissal of the curative effects of Mesmerism by those medical authorities, changes in the health of some mesmerised patients did occur, even if they were followed by relapses. The pages of The Zoist are full of reported cures; many of them may have been genuine.

Ignoring the occult aspects of Mesmerism - the strange magnetic fluid, the mysterious sessions of Mesmer himself, the clairvoyant claims and so on - if Mesmerism were to be stripped of its 'supernatural' elements and occult trappings, it would still be possible to discuss certain of the suggestive phenomena and the therapy of deep relaxation in terms of genuine hypnotic techniques.

In Chapter 1, I discussed Baudouin's theory that Mesmerism did have results, not because of its occult power but because of its incorporation of hypnotic techniques which remain of indisputable value in the treatment of certain psychiatric problems of some individuals. I also attempted to outline Baudouin's beliefs in the influence that Mesmerism had not only on 'spiritual healing', but also - and chiefly - on modern psychiatry, on suggestion, persuasion, psycho-analysis and autosuggestion.

Frederick W. H. Myers, in Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death,(7), discussed Hypnotism and argued in terms of the real power of suggestion. Myers' aim was of course to investigate 'super-normal

phenomena', and his conclusions supported religious orthodoxy - that Man does possess a surviving spirit. However, his attitudes and methods were not entirely unscientific; more important, his honesty of approach involved exhaustive research and an insistence upon the reliability of witnesses testifying to the existence of various phenomena. Myers' investigations also attempted to justify belief in the 'natural', explicable and unsensational nature of the phenomena. Accordingly, therefore, he discussed the successes of Mesmerism as genuine successes, (p. 100), but of powerful self-suggestion induced by the hypnotist/mesmerist, (p. 107). He wrote:

Hypnotic suppression of pain: This induced insensibility to pain has from the first been one of the main triumphs of Mesmerism or hypnotism. All have heard that Mesmerism will stop toothaches; - that you can have a tooth out 'under Mesmerism' without feeling it, (p. 113).

He accounted for this by concluding not that hypnotism attacks the pressure on a tooth, but the brain's apprehension of this pressure as pain.

Myers believed that the cures could be accounted for quite naturally, in terms of the inducement of hypnotic trance causing what he terms the 'subliminal', (sub-conscious) mind to usurp or gain control over the 'supraliminal' (conscious) mind. The mesmerist, having implanted the powerful suggestion of being cured into the sub-conscious mind of the patient suffering from a complaint based on some form of neurosis, would unwittingly have allowed this suggestion, during the entranced state, to rise from the sub-conscious into the conscious mind and to remain there. Therefore, when the patient was restored to permanent, 'conscious' living, ~~they~~ would believe that ~~they~~ had been cured, and would indeed appear to have been. This process was real to Myers, and explicable in a scientific, not an occult, way.(8)

All things considered, it seems likely that Mesmerism, stripped of its occult associations, could have had some effect in Harriet Martineau's case because of the genuinely effective hypnotic elements that were

present in Mesmerism. Obviously the tumour was not cured; but Harriet's 'recovery' was quite sudden and dramatic. She felt some change even after the first session, and her pain left her. It is fully possible that, although Mesmerism did not cure her, it relieved some of her pain through its hypnotic, therapeutic qualities.

Moreover, Harriet did refer quite distinctly to a sense of deep relaxation that she experienced under Mesmerism: "... a delicious sensation of ease spread through me, - a cool comfort, before which all pain and distress gave way," and this sense of relaxation, too, has survived in modern hypnosis.(9)

Finally, just as hypnosis is most recognisably effective in certain cases of mental disturbance and neurosis, (Marcuse, pp. 117-137), we should recall Harriet's own history of neurotic psychological disturbance. This related aspect of her case history, too, may have been influenced by the hypnotic factors in the course of mesmeric treatment administered in 1844.

Following her 'cure', Harriet undertook some research into mesmeric clairvoyance, and resolved to publish her sensational discoveries. In so doing, she became the centre of a controversy that brought both Mesmerism and Harriet's entire credibility and reputation into question. As J. C. Nevill observes: "... incautiously she strayed from therapeutics onto the fringe of the occult, and brought a swarm of controversial hornets buzzing about her head", (J. C. Nevill, p. 83).

To Harriet, the proof of the healing power of Mesmerism was clear, and the sensational clairvoyant elements of mesmeric trance led to the publication by C. W. Dilke, (10), of five articles by her, on Mesmerism, in The Athenaeum, in 1844. They appeared on Nov. 23rd and 30th, Dec. 7th, 14th and 21st, 1844, without payment and at Harriet's request. There were five articles, not six, as Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Wheatley state

2 letters are combined! 6-75

on pp. 129 and 235 of their books, nor sixteen as an earlier edition of The Encyclopaedia Britannica, edtn. 9, (1883), Vol. 15, p. 584, states.

The articles were published in 1845 in pamphlet-form, as Letters on Mesmerism. As previously stated, references made are taken from this edition.

In her preface to Letters on Mesmerism, Harriet defended her relation of the 'facts' in her own case, although they were but first impressions. The objections to her views, she said, "do not affect my object, which is not to convince A, B and C by what I am telling ... but to utter what I know and think," (p.vi). She defended Mesmerism from the abuse of doctors who lose patients to the 'cause' when they - the doctors - are themselves unable to cure these people. She deplored "the deficiency of educated Mesmerists", (p. ix), and called for a training centre to meet this need.

The first letter, dated Nov. 12th, 1844, and entitled 'Mesmeric Experience' concerned Harriet's encounter with Mesmerism. She wrote: "From the early summer of 1839 I was, till this autumn, a prisoner from illness. My recovery now, by means of mesmeric treatment alone, has given me the most thorough knowledge that Mesmerism is true," (p.3).

She related the events of the illness and collapse in Italy in 1839, her consequent life as an invalid, and introduction to Mesmerism by the Basil Montagus and her sister. She described the first session under Spencer Hall, (p. 7), the subsequent sessions, including that when the maid administered the passes, (p.9) and her gradual recovery, enabling her to walk for five miles after only two months of treatment, and her freedom from the necessity of taking opiates.

She observed little clairvoyance in her own case, apart from mesmeric 'rapport' with her maid. The maid could, at will, make her feel warm when she had mesmerised her, and make her taste water as wine.

(For further details of different aspects of 'mesmeric rapport', see annotation-note no. 26, Chapter 6. In future all cross-references to these 'annotation-notes', as distinct from the foot-notes, will be cited by the term, 'annotation-note').

The only other form of clairvoyance which Harriet experienced was her vision of all objects shining radiantly when she was mesmerised in the open air, (p. 15).

She described the trance-sensations, the feelings of transparency, vacancy, the sensation of her head changing its shape, the loss of physical apprehensions, etc. She stated that, while unable to account for Mesmerism: "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," (pp. 16-17).

The second letter, entitled 'Mesmeric Observation' and dated Nov. 20th, concerned Harriet's observation during mesmeric experiments with Jane Arrowsmith, the nineteen year old niece of her Tynemouth landlady - the later notorious 'apocalyptic housemaid'.

She described Jane's illnesses - severe headaches and inflamed eyes - and improvement on being mesmerised by Harriet's maid. Testifying to Jane's honesty, Harriet said: "J's strict and uncompromising truthfulness forms a striking contrast with the vagaries of hackneyed, and otherwise mismanaged somnambules," (p. 22)

Jane's clairvoyance, carefully handled by her mesmerists, was in marked contrast, according to Harriet, to that of 'Alexis', a famous French somnambule and mesmeric clairvoyant, (11), whose powers had been reduced through being overworked, Harriet asserted, (p. 29).

Harriet discussed Jane's amazing pronouncements regarding Harriet's ailments and ways of treating them, her knowledge of words of which she was totally ignorant in the non-mesmeric state, her writing with her eyes bandaged, (p. 33), etc.

This letter contained the most controversial and sensational claims for Jane's clairvoyance. According to Harriet, on Oct. 14th there occurred a shipwreck off Hull involving a cousin of Jane's. In mesmeric trance, Jane declared that her cousin had escaped from the wreck, (p. 26), and that a boy on the ship had been killed in an accident before the storm.

In her third letter, 'Spirit of Enquiry', dated Nov. 23rd, Harriet condemned bigoted hostility towards Mesmerism: "The denial met with from those who have witnessed no course of mesmeric facts needs no notice," (p. 40).

She assailed fraudulent mesmerists and the mercenary exploitation of the phenomenon, (p. 40), urging scientists to enquire objectively into Mesmerism, (p. 45). She concluded that, if Mesmerism were true, "the world will be so much the better," (p. 46).

The fourth letter, 'Spirit of Conviction', (Nov. 26th), described the dismay of those cured by Mesmerism at being denounced as liars, (p. 47). Harriet declared the sacredness of the phenomenon, (pp. 48 and 51), condemned those who denounced the cured, (p. 55), and praised the conviction of the reasonable person's belief in Mesmerism, (p. 57).

The fifth letter, written from Tynemouth on Nov. 28th, 1844, was entitled 'Freedom of Acceptance'. This, the last in the series, repeated the previous attacks on the bigoted opponent of Mesmerism, (p. 58), regretted the hostility of many religious people to the phenomenon, and urged informed enquiry into Mesmerism. Harriet declared that, in view of the bigoted prejudices of many doctors, despite the 'factual' evidence of cures, it was hardly surprising that Mesmerism was being exploited by fools, charlatans, and fortune-tellers. She concluded: "these are the chief considerations that have caused me to put forth these letters in The Athenaeum," (p. 62).

Letters on Mesmerism caused immediate controversy. To claim to have been cured by Mesmerism was bad enough in the eyes of many, but Harriet's claims for the clairvoyant powers of her housemaid were too much. Moreover, Dilke himself, who published the letters in The Athenaeum, had meanwhile discovered that there was some doubt as to the reliability of the events in Harriet's account. He could not resist the temptation of capitalising on Harriet's vulnerability. As J.C. Nevill says: "to catch Miss Martineau tripping was too good an opportunity to be missed, and Dilke ..., put in possession of the true facts of the case, published a crushing counterblast to Harriet's claims," (J.C. Nevill, pp. 83-84).

Dilke's article, 'A Few Works by Way of Comment on Miss Martineau's Statement', was published in The Athenaeum on Dec. 28th, 1844, and was followed by further statements and counter-statements in the issues of Jan. 4th, March 15th, 22nd and 29th, April 5th and 12th, 1845. The article ignored the 'cure', and concentrated instead on ridiculing the clairvoyant aspects of Harriet's mesmeric involvement: for it had been discovered that, regarding Jane's so-called 'vision' of her cousin's escape in the shipwreck, the sailor's mother had in fact gone to Shields and returned with the news of the rescue some while before the girl had been mesmerised and had begun to make clairvoyant utterances.

Dilke then published an extract from Dr. Greenhow's medical report. As has already been stated, this report - originally drawn up with Harriet's agreement - infuriated her; it later appeared as a shilling pamphlet on sale to the public. Harriet was outraged by this blatant broadcast of her intimate medical problems, and the incident caused a lasting rift between herself and Greenhow.

Attempting to offset Dilke's disastrous accusation that Jane had known of the shipwreck and the subsequent events prior to the

mesmeric séance, Harriet sent a solicitor to obtain contrary statements from Jane's aunts. Later, she asserted in her Autobiography, that Dilke and others were mistaken in believing that they had 'exposed' Jane. She asserted that during the course of mesmeric treatment she had kept a diary of events asserting: "Medical men ... have agreed in saying that it is as cool as if written by a professional observer," (Autobiography, i, p. 474). She discussed her attempts to secure recognition of Jane's truthfulness:

I hold also an additional legal declaration which establishes the main fact on which the somnambule's story of the shipwreck was attempted to be overthrown. The whole set of documents has been shown to a great variety of people - lawyers and clergymen, among others, and all but medical men have declared ... that the evidence is as strong as evidence can be on any transaction whatever," (Autobiography, i, pp. 477-478).

Harriet could not prove her claims convincingly, however; her 'proof' drawn from statements made by people already involved, asserting that their original claims were valid, was no 'proof' whatever. Harriet continued to worry about this matter for the rest of her life.

She discussed the attempts which were made to blacken Jane's reputation, and related how Jane became blind at Tynemouth when mesmeric treatment was no longer administered to her, (Autobiography, i, p. 519). Jane was, it seems, threatened with imprisonment by the doctors who then attended her, unless she retracted her claims, Harriet asserted. Rescued by a "benevolent druggist", however, and mesmerised again, Jane improved and Harriet said, "I soon found that she was mesmerizing a diseased baby in the cottage, and teaching the mother to do it; whereby the child lived for months after the medical man declined visiting it any more, because it was dying", (Autobiography, i, p. 520). Despite Mesmerism, however, the child eventually died.

Harriet mesmerised Jane, claimed that she regained her sight for her, and took her into service as her maid. Jane Arrowsmith eventually

became cook to the High Sheriff of Melbourne, Australia, (Autobiography, i, p. 520).

Following the publication of Letters on Mesmerism, and the ensuing debate in the columns of The Athenaeum, the mesmeric controversy was opened to public discussion. Many people supported Harriet; others dismissed, deplored or ridiculed her claims.

Mary Russell Mitford, a staunch believer in Mesmerism, wrote to Miss Harrison on Dec. 31st, 1844: "What do you think of Mesmerism? Miss Martineau's case has made a great stir."(12).

The Brownings were particularly interested in the controversy, and Elizabeth Barrett's correspondence abounded with references to and opinions of Harriet's mesmeric involvement and her claims. Elizabeth - herself an invalid - wrote to Mrs. Martin of Harriet's improvement, in Sept. 1844:

And the means - the means! Such means you would never divine! It is mesmerism. She is thrown into the magnetic trance twice a day; and the progress is manifest; and the hope for the future clear... Is it not wonderful and past expectation? She suggests that I should try the means - but I understand that in cases like mine the remedy has done harm instead of good, by over-exciting the system. But her experience will settle the question of the reality of magnetism with a whole generation of infidels. For my part, I have long been a believer, in spite of papa," (Letters of E.B. Browning, i, pp. 196-197).

Elizabeth informed Cornelius Mathews on Oct. 1st, 1844: "Harriet Martineau is better and likely to be better. She told me so herself, and attributes the change to the agency of mesmerism," (Letters of E. B. Browning, i, p. 200). To John Kenyon she wrote on Nov. 8th, 1844: "Why shouldn't Miss Martineau's apocalyptic housemaid tell us whether Flush,(13), has a soul, and what is its future destination?" (Letters of E. B. Browning i, p. 212).

(Previously she had told Mrs. Martin that Mr. Kenyon had said, "I believe in mesmerism, but not in mesmerists," (Letters of E. B. Browning, i, p.205); letter dated Oct. 15th, 1844).

She informed Mrs. Martin that Harriet's case had received the support of Monkton Milnes, politician and poet, (see also Chapter 7):

Mr. Milnes has, besides, been her visitor. He is fully a believer, she says, and affirms to having seen the same phenomena in the East, but regards the whole subject with horror. This still appears to be Mrs. Jameson's feeling, as you know it is mine", (Letters of E.B. Browning, i, p.217; letter dated Nov. 26th, 1844).

When the controversy concerning Harriet's published mesmeric claims and observations was raging, Elizabeth wrote to James Martin on Dec. 10th, 1844:

You are to know that Miss Martineau's mesmeric experience is only peculiar as being Harriet Martineau's, otherwise it exhibits the mere commonplaces of the agency. You laugh, I see. I wish I could laugh too. I mean, I seriously wish that I could disbelieve in the reality of the power, which is in every way repulsive to me ...

In the meantime, poor Miss Martineau, as the consequence of her desire to speak the truth as she apprehends it, is overwhelmed with atrocious insults from all quarters ... But she has singular strength of mind, and calmly continues her testimony.

Miss Mitford writes to me: 'Be sure it is all true. I see it every day in my Jane' - her maid, who is mesmerised for deafness, but not, I believe, with much success curatively ... With Miss Mitford's maid, the sleep is, however, produced; and the girl professed, at the third séance, to be able to see behind her, (Letters of E. B. Browning, i, pp. 219-220).

Clearly many of the insults which had been levelled at Harriet distressed Elizabeth despite her personal suspicions of the 'facts' which she could not dispute; she wrote to H. S. Boyd on Dec. 24th, 1844, that, when she heard the vicious nature of these insults, "a righteous indignation fastens on me", (Letters of E. B. Browning, i, pp. 225-226).

Elizabeth's mounting reservations about Mesmerism were expressed in a letter to Mrs. Jameson, to whom she wrote in Dec., 1844:

And now I do not like to send you this letter without telling you my impression about Mesmerism ... I will confess, then, that my impression is in favour of the reality of mesmerism to some unknown extent. I particularly dislike believing it, I would rather believe most other things in the world; but the evidence of 'the cloud of witnesses' does thunder and lightning so in my ears and eyes, that I believe, while my blood runs cold. I would not be practised upon - no, not for one of Flushie's ears, and I hate the whole theory. It is hideous to my

imagination, especially what is called phrenological mesmerism. After all, however, truth is to be accepted; and testimony, when so various and decisive, is an assertion of truth. Now do not tell Mr. Dilke, lest he excommunicate me, (Letters of E. B. Browning, i, p. 228).

Elizabeth, whose attitude towards Mesmerism was clearly becoming more sceptical, had much to say regarding the exposure of the wreck story. She wrote to Mr. Chorley on April 28th, 1845:

The Athenaeum has done quite enough to disprove the proving of the wreck story... The disproving of the proof of the wreck story is indeed enough to disprove the wreck story and to disprove mesmerism itself... with all doubters and undetermined enquirers,

observing, however,

Miss Martineau is not only a believer in the mysteries of mesmerism (and she wrote to me the other day that in Birmingham ... she has present cognisance of three cases of clairvoyance), but she is a believer in the personal integrity of her witnesses, (Letters of E.B. Browning, i, pp. 256-257).

As to Elizabeth's own aversion to dabbling in Mesmerism, she re-affirmed her views to Mrs. Martin in Jan. 1845:

By the way, I had a letter and the present of a work on Mesmerism - Mr. Newnham's (14) - from his daughter ... I wrote to thank her ... and to explain how I did not stand in reach just now of the temptations of mesmerism. I might have said that I shrank nearly as much from these 'temptations' as from Lord Bacon's stew of infant children for the purposes of witchcraft, (Letters of E.B. Browning, i, p. 238).

Again, when someone apparently suggested to her to send a lock of her hair to a Parisian mesmerist for him to have a clairvoyant vision concerning her, she wrote to Mr. Chorley on April 28th, 1845: "Did you ever, since the days of the witches, hear a more ghastly proposition?" (Letters of E.B. Browning, i, p. 258).

In communication with Robert Browning, whom she married in 1846, Elizabeth's reservations became more explicit. She wrote to him on Jan. 26th, 1846: "I believe so much of mesmerism ... without absolutely giving full credence to it, understand." (15).

However, Browning's reservations were far stronger than Elizabeth's. He observed wryly in a letter of Oct. 15th, 1845: "Miss Martineau makes a finessing servant girl her physician-general", (Letters of R. and E.B. Browning, i, p. 246).

When he did express his views more clearly to Elizabeth, on Jan. 27th, 1846, he explained:

Understand that I do not disbelieve in Mesmerism - I only object to insufficient evidence being put forward as quite irrefragable. I keep an open sense on the subject - ready to be instructed; and should have refused such testimony as Miss Martineau's if it had been adduced in support of something I firmly believed", (Letters of R. and E. B. Browning, i, p. 441).

Finally, as if to underline his suspicions of Harriet's unreliability, he made a wry observation classing Harriet with D. D. Home (1833-1886), the famous spiritualist medium whose activities were of great interest to Elizabeth, but to whom Robert himself gave no credence whatever. Robert scornfully said of Home in a letter of Feb. 11th, 1846: "Miss Martineau understands him better", (Letters of R. and E. B. Browning, i, p. 469), although, despite her belief in Mesmerism, Harriet was opposed to spiritualism (see Chapter 6, annotation-note No. 46).

Others were less critical of Harriet than Browning, however. Her publisher, Charles Knight, (16), was delighted to hear of her recovery. In the Birmingham Collection of Harriet Martineau Correspondence, there is a hitherto unpublished letter from Knight to Harriet, catalogued HM 1109, dated Monday Oct. 7th, 1844, and written from Highgate, in which Knight said:

It is a long while since I wrote to you, my dear friend, and yet you are very seldom out of my thoughts. Your information as to your own condition did not surprise me for I guessed at something remarkable from a hint you had previously given. But it has bewildered me, and I know not how to express myself on this engaging subject. I did not venture to talk to any one on the semi-miracle, for I knew not how you might as yet wish the matter to be kept private. Within a week I have heard it mentioned without reserve in two quarters. I can trace the information in one instance to your relations at Tulse Hill, in the other to the Carlyles, as I judge. But everyone agrees that you are surprisingly recovered; and I cannot tell you with what gladness I heard it mentioned even by those to whom you are previously unknown. There is some exaggeration, I dare say, for I was told by one that you could walk a mile. God be praised, if you can walk across your room without painful effort. I am told too, that you are going to write a book describing the whole course of your sensations. I hope this is true. Frankly, I must say that I am not only ignorant of what has been done in Mesmerism, but

have rather shrunk from any enquiry into the subject, from the fear of not seeing my way through delusions and perhaps impostures. But give me a clear case such as yours, set forth by one of vigorous understanding, whose imagination is under due subjection, and a new chapter is opened for me on the history of man that I must read with wonder and reverence. That you should be selected to make this mystery somewhat intelligible, and what is better to lead us onto the great spiritual ideas that must rise out of the contemplation of it, is a blessing that you must feel almost more than the relief from pain and lassitude. How little know we yet of the full scope of the words 'we are fearfully and wonderfully made'.

Knight proceeded to discuss the fact that, having not written to Harriet for a long time, he had been working hard and suddenly, inexplicably, had decided to write to her. He continued: "What are the sudden impulses by which I am swayed. They are as unaccountable to me as your 'visual appearances'..."

(Presumably the latter was a reference to Harriet seeing objects dissolving into shadows during mesmeric sessions, as described in Letters on Mesmerism).

If Charles Knight were delighted by Harriet's recovery, however, her sister Rachel and her mother were not. Mrs. Martineau strongly disapproved of Harriet's activities, and refused to see her. As J. C. Nevill says: "Mrs. Martineau ... was horrified by the tales of trances, of unhallowed cleavings of the air, of impious laying on of hands ... and declined to receive a visit from her daughter when she was well enough to travel again." (J. C. Nevill, p. 85).

Harriet's own comment on her mother's disgusted reaction was, however, restrained. She wrote of Mrs. Martineau: "By evil offices, working on her prejudice against mesmerism, she had been prevented from meeting me after my recovery", (Autobiography, ii, pp. 16-17).

Mrs. Martineau doubtless regarded the cure as utterly godless. Harriet's brother James probably agreed. His relationship with Harriet had already been damaged by her request for all of her

correspondence to be returned or destroyed. Their friendship was ended by her later Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851).

Mesmerism was another sphere of contention between the brother and sister.

James Martineau's biographers write of this period:

Although pleasant intercourse had become impossible ever since the letter-burning mandate, there was another cause of vexation. This was the time when Miss Martineau was engaged in controversy with Mr. Greenhow about her malady and its cure by mesmerism. Her brother was quite unable to concur in her views; but he neither published nor volunteered any expression of his opinion, and simply claimed to be let alone in having it. She seems, however, to have made a difference of opinion a source of personal offence, and to have believed too readily what are characterised as 'injurious fictions' about him. Her mind was evidently excited and morbid; and Mrs. Martineau's sister, who endeavoured to present things to her in a truer light, writes: 'Everything convinces me to demonstration that all attempts to give her just views of your conduct and feelings would be worse than useless'. (17)

However, if Mrs. Martineau and James could not approve, other members of her family, considering the 'means', Mesmerism, to have been justified by the 'end' - the 'cure' - supported her, including her youngest sister Ellen, (1811-1889), and her elder brother, Robert, (1798-1870).

Harriet was also supported by The Zoist. Its founder-editor, Dr. John Elliotson, saw in Harriet the ideal mesmeric success who would assist the propagation of Mesmerism. He published an article supporting Harriet in the face of her more virulent critics, entitled, 'Miss Martineau and her Traducers', (Zoist, Vol. 3, Mar. 1845 - Jan. 1846, pp. 89-96), referring to the controversy with Greenhow, (p. 94). This was followed by 'The Health of Miss Martineau', (Zoist, Vol. 3, pp. 535-537), an article which in fact took the form of a letter she had written to Captain James, (18), describing her cure, her health, the experiments with Jane Arrowsmith, etc. Elliotson then published some letters from Harriet to himself written in June, 1846, (Zoist, Vol. 4, Mar. 1846- Jan. 1847, pp. 275-277), asserting her complete cure and vouching for Jane's integrity. Finally The Zoist included a note from John Ashburner, (19), supporting her and her claims, (Zoist, Vol. 9, Mar. 1851 - Jan. 1852, p. 273).

By no means all of the comments on Harriet's cure were as kind and as generous as this. Elizabeth Rigby, Lady Eastlake, was adamant in her condemnation of Mesmerism. She was, like Harriet, a native of Norwich who, Mrs. Wheatley informs us, "heartily disliked the Martineaus, particularly Harriet", (V. Wheatley, p. 237). Marion Lochhead accounts for Elizabeth Rigby's dislike of Harriet: "She and Lady Eastlake were utterly divergent in outlook, beliefs and principles. They were, for all that, of the same temper and quality: alike in their strength of intellect, their force of character, their vitality."(20).

Lady Eastlake wrote in her journal on Dec. 24th, 1844:

To Lady Murray's in the evening. Prondi, who was there, had been with Miss Martineau. Fearful nonsense, and impious flippancy. Even the sorcerers of old did not pretend to their power without certain incantations - preparations, in short; but these creatures, without labour, without thought, without study, without form, affect to exercise perfect power over the will of their fellow creatures. No other power in this world is attained without trouble, why then this? It is an odious, disgusting and impious business, and is worthily advocated by women without principle, and lectured upon by men who drop their h's. (21)

(Lady Eastlake's editor, her nephew Charles Eastlake Smith, inserted a footnote explaining that 'Prondi' was a mesmerist).

Macready, shown Letters on Mesmerism by John Forster, was aghast and questioned Harriet's sanity. He wrote on Nov. 26th, 1844: "Forster read me Miss Martineau's letters. They stagger one in one's incredulity on Mesmerism - is she in her clear senses?"(22)

Later, however, he visited Harriet and modified his views, writing:

I had received a pamphlet and a long letter from Professor Gregory on the subject of mesmerism on which we had talked a little at Major Thom's on Saturday last; it is a translation of Reichenbach, and, with some curious facts mentioned by Miss Martineau, certainly made me pause in my utter rejection of this hitherto inscrutable and mysterious power, if power it really be," (Diaries, ii, pp. 330-331; entry March 25th, 1846).

Macready, then, was apparently partially converted to belief in Mesmerism. Wordsworth, on the other hand, retained his scepticism, especially of the stories he had heard about Harriet's somnambule Jane

being made to taste water as sherry at her mesmerist's inducement,
 (Letters on Mesmerism, p. 36). Writing of Harriet to Isabella Fenwick on
 Dec. 14th, 1844, Wordsworth said:

As to Miss M. I feel no little resentment against her, for the sake of her sex, far more, than on account of herself, at having been the cause of her infirmities and internal complaints being discussed as I have seen them in the newspapers. Mesmerism is no doubt a Power, a very noticeable power, but I have no faith in its having effected her cure, more than any application or occurrence would have done, which in the then state of her body had suddenly put her upon exerting herself. Time, rest and nature were bringing about her cure and Mesmerism came luckily in for the honor of the achievement. Miss Fleming of Rayrigg lay in bed for five successive years - Her Father came suddenly into the house after an absence - she arose from her bed and ran to the stairs to meet him and thenceforward went about like any body else. Had she been mesmerised the change would have been ascribed to that agent. Thank you for thinking of my poor dear Sister - Time hangs heavy upon her in the evenings - she was grievously disappointed when I told her just now it was only 7 o'clock - her hour for going to bed is 8. If I had far more confidence in Miss M's remedy than I can muster, I durst not trust her to its influence - being quite unable to conjecture what, in her case, might come of it. The responsibility would alarm me. As to the Maid's clairvoyance and the Brandy, of that we have only vaguely heard, and of course I can give no opinion of it except that it seemed monstrous and absurd. (23)

In January 1845, however, Mrs. Wordsworth was sent a copy of the pamphlet version of Letters on Mesmerism by its publisher, Edward Moxon. In a letter dated Jan. 23rd, 1845, Wordsworth, on behalf of his wife, thanked Moxon, (Letters of W. and D. Wordsworth, pp. 1235-1236). He was now able to express his views more positively, especially since Harriet, Jane Arrowsmith and Mrs. Wynard, (whose name Wordsworth gave two different spellings in the letter that follows), had now arrived in the Lake District and had held mesmeric sessions with the nearby Arnolds. Wordsworth wrote to Isabella Fenwick on Jan. 25th, 1845:

You are strongly infected with the Mesmeric mania, I am therefore pleased to tell you that the Herald and Proclaimer of the Virtues of the process is desirous of obtaining a lodging in these parts so that you have good prospect of a favourable opportunity for cultivating her acquaintance ... Did we tell you that Mr. Robinson and some of the Arnolds were

present when Mrs. Winyard performed upon Jane. Mary Arnold has taken most accurate memorandums of all that occurred, and you may see them yourself, but it should seem that nothing at all decisive happened, except that when the organ of veneration was touched the sleeper assumed an attitude and expression of devotion more beautiful than he, Mr. R, ever beheld. When Miss M. drank tea at Mrs. Arnolds on Thursday, Mrs. Wynyard could not be of the party, because Jane was by all means to be mesmerised on that day, it being Thursday, and on Thursdays the effects are always the most striking. What say you my dear one, to this? Mr. Grigg who is a Mesmeriser has undertaken Miss Martineau with a view to relieve or cure her deafness. - Enough of this, (Letters of W. and D. Wordsworth, pp. 1243-1244).

(Wordsworth was referring in this letter to the following people:

'Mr. Robinson', and 'Mr. R', Crabb Robinson; 'Jane', Jane Arrowsmith; 'Mary Arnold', Matthew Arnold's younger sister, 1825-1888; 'Mrs. Arnold', his mother).

When James Payn visited Harriet at her own home at Ambleside, 'the Knoll', he was deeply interested in Jane Arrowsmith, and wrote that, "Although by no means beautiful, had her attractions for me, for she had been the subject of certain scientific (mesmeric) experiments which had aroused much discussion." (24). Of Mesmerism, he continued:

For my own part I have never believed in these marvels. I entertain a Philistine scepticism upon the subject of most 'isms', and at that time was very much inclined to laugh at them in a disrespectful manner; but I never laughed at Harriet Martineau, though often with her, (Some Lit. Recollections, p. 106).

Macaulay's dismissal of Mesmerism was characterised by its significant association of the phenomenon with Harriet. He wrote of Mesmerism: "It's all my eye and Hetty Martineau." (25).

Jane Welsh Carlyle was particularly critical of the 'apocalyptic housemaid'. She wrote to her uncle, John Welsh, on Dec. 13th, 1847:

Of course a vast deal of what one hears is humbug. This girl of Harriet's seems half diseased, half make-believing! I think it is a horrible blasphemy they are there perpetrating in exploiting that girl for their idle purposes of curiosity! (26).

Of Harriet's mesmerist, Mrs. 'Winyard' as she called her, Jane Carlyle noted that, had she lived earlier historically, she would have been burned as a witch - deservedly so, since her investigations

were, "not the result of superstitious ignorance, but of educated self-conceit," (ibid.). Finally, she denounced dabbling in Mesmerism as "tempting of Providence," (ibid.).

One of the strangest comments on Harriet's 'cure' was an attack by Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna entitled Mesmerism: A Letter to Miss Martineau, (27), an assault based firmly on Christian tenets.

The letter, written after the publication of Harriet's third letter in The Athenaeum, acquitted Harriet of being "guilty of falsehood", and of being gulled by others; Charlotte said: "I do not disbelieve any part of your narrative, therefore I am reduced to the necessity of regarding the affair as one of a supernatural complexion. And, if supernatural, it is most assuredly diabolical", (p. 4). Dramatically she continued: "If you have been ensnared by Infidel principles, then, alas! you are led captive by Satan at his will, and he can use you in whatsoever way he shall choose for the furtherance of his dark designs", (p.5)

She rejected Mesmerism as "a branch of sorcery", adding that, as such, it was condemned in the Bible. She also decried the mesmerists' descriptions of the sacred miracles of Jesus, as mesmeric, since to her Mesmerism was "the power of Beelzebub", (p. 7).

She accused Harriet of unwittingly leading the unwary to the gulf of "Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost", and she exhorted her to "Pause, ere it be too late", (ibid.).

She accepted that cures occurred by mesmeric means, but called them Satanic, likewise describing the indisputable facts of mesmeric clairvoyance as demonic. She said of mesmeric trance: "Then, Madam, I tell you, without hesitation, that the body, which you have thrown into such torpor, becomes the helpless, passive, unconscious, polluted receptacle of an evil spirit", (p. 9), and she continued: "I pray God you may have

grace given you to pause and turn".

As for the experiments in which Jane had been willed, in trance, to taste water as sherry or beer, Charlotte Elizabeth declared:

"This last incident was devised by Satan to pour contempt... on the miracle of Cana", (i.e. when Christ turned water into wine at a wedding-feast).

Charlotte's final exhortation to Harriet was grand and rhetorical:

Oh that I could impress your mind with the thrilling reality of your present danger ...! Do not reject my words; they are those of truth and soberness, and I have no motive in writing them but the earnest desire that I feel to warn my fellow Christians of the net spread for their feet, (p. 15).

Finally, in a spirit of decorum, she concluded: "I request your pardon, if, in any instance, I have appeared personally uncourteous", (ibid.).

An unexpected 'mesmeric enthusiast' following the stormy controversy after the 'cure', was Charlotte Brontë, who, though as staunch an Anglican as Charlotte Elizabeth was an evangelical, did not see an unresolvable incompatibility between Christianity and Mesmerism.(28).

Harriet first met Charlotte Brontë in 1849. Mrs. Gaskell related Charlotte's account of subsequent events in 1850:

You ask me whether Miss Martineau made me a convert to mesmerism? Scarcely; yet I heard miracles of its efficacy, and could hardly discredit the whole of what was told me. I even underwent a personal experiment; and though the result was not absolutely clear, it was inferred that in time I should prove an excellent subject. The question of Mesmerism will be discussed with little reserve, I believe, in a forthcoming work of Miss Martineau's; and I have some painful anticipation of the manner in which other subjects, offering less legitimate ground for speculation, will be handled." (29).

Margaret Lane supplies an account of the mesmeric episode which reveals a far greater involvement on Charlotte's part than Mrs. Gaskell's Life implies. Understating and wrongly describing the circumstances of the 'cure', she says:

Miss Martineau was a recent convert to mesmerism, having been cured by this means of a troublesome nervous ailment. She had learned as well to practise it herself, and

Charlotte persuaded her to make a personal experiment, though Miss Martineau, shrewdly sensing the hysterical in Charlotte, was apprehensive. 'She was strangely pertinacious about that', she told Mrs. Gaskell, 'and I most reluctant to bring it before her at all, we being alone, and I having no confidence in her nerves. Day after day she urged me to mesmerise her. I always, and quite truly, pleaded that I was too tired for success, for we had no opportunity till the end of the day. At last, on Sunday evening, we returned from early tea somewhere; I could not say I was tired, and she insisted. I stopped the moment she called out that she was under the influence, and I would not resume it'. Charlotte was evidently disappointed, though pleased with Miss Martineau's cautious opinion that in time she would prove an excellent subject. Miss Martineau was evidently sensitive enough to perceive that Charlotte's temperament made her a ripe subject for hypnosis, though she knew nothing of the trance-like states which in the past had been self-induced by both Charlotte and Emily.(30)

Comment on Harriet's cure varied, therefore: to Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, she was dabbling in Satanic powers; to Mrs. Martineau and Rachel and James, and Lady Eastlake, she had become involved in a disgusting and distressing practice. Dilke, Macaulay and Payn mocked her; Wordsworth and Browning were sceptical. Macready, Mrs. Jameson, Jane Welsh Carlyle and Elizabeth Barrett were cautious believers; Miss Mitford was enthusiastic. Charles Knight, Ellen and Robert Martineau fully supported her; Charlotte Brontë both believed and was fascinated.

R. K. Webb observes that, regarding the 'cure', Harriet was accused of behaving as she did, "because she wanted notoriety", (R. K. Webb, p. 12). He does not agree with this himself, however, saying: "Conceit I will grant... But she had more important ends to serve than self-aggrandizement", (ibid.)

Mrs. Chapman tolerated none of the criticisms, attributing them to annoyance at Harriet's upset of conventional expectations: "That she recovered when she ought to have died was an unpardonable offence", ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 569).

Cured or only apparently so, sensationalist or just passionately defensive, what is certain is that Harriet became involved in one

of the controversies of her age, the 'mesmeric craze', and that, through her, some of the most famous, most notable and most interesting of her contemporaries were inspired, in some cases by a sense of outrage, to judge and to comment.

Sketch of the life of Anna Jackson, by her niece Sarah Jane Thompson, (1876), p. 209.

Harriet Martineau: English Life, present and past, (1848),

1, p. 209. The passage concerns the crossing of the Sinai Desert.

Sir Thomas Watson's statement was a reply to an editorial note in

the British Medical Journal, July 2nd, 1876, pp. 20-21, entitled

'The late Harriet Martineau'. This note asserted that Harriet was

suffering from a heart condition in 1855, and concluded:

There can be no doubt that Harriet Martineau's case is not one of the triumphs of the profession, and that the public attention attracted to her case did not add to the confidence of many persons in medical skill as to the diagnosis and prognosis of affections of the heart, (p. 21)

On July 5th, 1876, it was announced in the Journal that this note, "has elicited a very interesting letter... from Sir Thomas Watson," (p. 52).

Sir Thomas Watson, (1792-1882), after a distinguished medical career, became physician extraordinary to Queen Victoria in 1859, and attended Prince Albert during his last illness.

Dr. Peter Latham, (1789-1875), was made physician extraordinary to the Queen in 1837, and was concerned in the discussion of the symptoms and post-mortem of Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby School.

As will be discussed in the text shortly, Harriet consulted both of these physicians in 1855.

Following Sir Thomas Watson's letter in the British Medical Journal, another communication, from James Martin, was published on July 15th, 1876, stating: "her case was one of heart"

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

- (1) Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, (1897), i, p. 161. The work will in future be referred to as Letters of E. B. Browning.
- (2) Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson, by her niece Gerardine Macpherson, (1878), p. 209.
- (3) Harriet Martineau: Eastern Life, present and past, (1848), ii, p. 209. The passage concerns the crossing of the Sinai Desert.
- (4) Sir Thomas Watson's statement was a reply to an editorial note in the British Medical Journal, July 1st, 1876, pp. 20-21, entitled 'The Late Harriet Martineau'. This note asserted that Harriet was suffering from a heart condition in 1855, and conceded:

There can be no doubt that Harriet Martineau's case is not one of the triumphs of the profession, and that the public attention attracted to her case did not add to the confidence of many persons in medical skill as to the diagnosis and prognosis of affections of the heart, (p.21)

On July 8th, 1876, it was announced in the journal that this note, "has elicited a very interesting letter ... from Sir Thomas Watson," (p.52).

Sir Thomas Watson, (1792-1882), after a distinguished medical career, became physician extraordinary to Queen Victoria in 1859, and attended Prince Albert during his last illness.

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As will be discussed in the text shortly, Harriet consulted both of these physicians in 1855.

Following Sir Thomas Watson's letter in the British Medical Journal, another communication, from James Martin, was published on July 15th, 1876, stating: "her case was one of heart

disease; it was one the nervous symptoms of which might be relieved by the soothing effect of so-called mesmeric-passes operating on the periphery of the nervous system", (p.99).

Martin cautiously concluded: "If mesmeric passes relieve suffering, adopt them by all means; but in placing value on their effects, be careful to discriminate what we think has relieved us and what had real connection with the removal of the disease", (ibid)

- (5) Mesmerists claimed that Mesmerism was more powerful than opium, obviously because Mesmerism claimed the ability to cure disease, whereas opium could only alleviate the pain which accompanied disease.

Thomas De Quincey asserted that opium was anodynous and not curative:

In one sense, and remotely, all medicines and modes of medical treatment offer themselves as anodynes - that is, so far as they promise ultimately to relieve the suffering connected with physical maladies or infirmities. But we do not, in the ordinary sense, designate as 'anodynes' those remedies which obtain the relief from pain only as a secondary and distant effect following out from the cure of the ailment; but those only we call anodynes which obtain this relief and pursue it as the primary and immediate object, The Confessions of an English Opium Eater, (1821), 'Original Preface', Everyman edtn., (1967), p. 7.

In view of this it is interesting that the Zoist discussed the superiority of Mesmerism over opium in Vol. 6, Mar. 1848 - Jan. 1849, pp. 93-95, concerning the efficacy of Mesmerism in curing opium taking.

- (6) If Harriet had wanted to survive, and still believed in Mesmerism towards the end of her life, she should, during her later illness, have had faith in the possibility of a second 'cure'. However, her rejection of Mesmerism as a key to survival does not necessarily mean that she no longer believed in it. She may, indeed, have genuinely wanted to die. After all, she had lost her religious faith, had led a long, full, active and successful life, and at the age of seventy-four, (which she had attained when she died in 1876), may well have thought that she had nothing further to live for,

even if Mesmerism could have prolonged her existence. Even despite her atheism, she did not die unhappily, which suggests that, as an aged person, she could herself see no point in continuing to live. As she wrote to Atkinson in her last letter to him on May 19th, 1876:

I well remember the passion with which W. E. Forster said to me, 'I had rather be damned than annihilated'. If he once felt five minutes' damnation, he would be thankful for extinction in preference. The truth is, I care little about it any way. Now that the event draws near, and that I see how fully my household expect my death pretty soon, the universe opens so widely before my view, and I see the old notions of death and scenes to follow to be so merely human - so impossible to be true, when one glances through the range of science - that I see nothing to be done but to wait, without fear or hope or ignorant prejudice, for the expiration of life. I have no wish for further experience, not have I any fear of it, ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 557).

Finally, it is worth noting that such acceptance and resignation to death were not new to Harriet's thought-life, as the neurosis of the would-be child suicide and the languour of the resigned prisoner in the Tynemouth sick-room, (see Chapter 2), imply.

- (7) F. W. H. Myers: Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death, (1903), ed. and abridged by S.B. and L.H.M., (1919). Chapter 5 concerns Hypnotism.
- (8) Myers' theories in this respect were given credit by John Addington Symonds, the author. He wrote to Henry Sidgwick on March 4th, 1892: "I am fascinated by Myers' treatise on the subliminal consciousness ... Rightly, he confines himself to proof or plausible inference from more or less accredited phenomena," Letters and Papers of John Addington Symonds, collected and ed. by Horatio F. Brown, (1923), p.255.
- (9) Harriet Martineau: Letters on Mesmerism, (1945), p.9. All quotations are from this edition.

For an account of the phenomenon of deep relaxation in modern hypnotic trance, see F. L. Marcuse: Hypnosis, Fact and Fiction, (1959), Penguin edtn. (1974), p.22. This work is later cited as 'Marcuse'.

- (10) Charles Wentworth Dilke, (1789-1864), antiquary, critic, friend of Keats, Leigh Hunt, Hood and Shelley, contributed to periodicals and became editor of the Athenaeum in 1830, and manager of the Daily News in 1846.

- (11) Alexis Didier's activities are described as follows by Robert Lee Wolff:

In The Zoist ... one may read a whole series of articles appearing year after year about the remarkable clairvoyant performances of a young French somnambule named Alexis Didier ... Alexis would read passages of texts from a closed book given him in a parcel; he could accurately describe for those present at one of his séances the interiors of their houses, although he had never seen them, down to the last detail of the signature on a painting over the drawing room fireplace," Strange Stories and other Explorations in Victorian Fiction, (Boston), 1971, p. 240.

The following articles and references concerning Alexis appeared in The Zoist:-

- Vol. 2, April. 1844 - Jan. 1845, pp. 393-409, 504, 507, 516, 518.
- Vol. 3, Mar. 1845 - Jan. 1846, pp. 389-397.
- Vol. 6, Mar. 1848 - Jan. 1849, p. 417.
- Vol. 7, Mar. 1849 - Jan. 1850, p. 96.
- Vol. 9, Mar. 1851 - Jan. 1852, p. 402.
- Vol. 10, Mar. 1852 - Jan. 1853, p. 221.

A further article appeared in The Mesmerist, a Journal of Vital Magnetism, no. 11, July 22nd, 1843, p. 84.

- (12) Letters of Mary Russell Mitford, Second series, ed. Henry Chorley, (1872), ii, p. 13.
- (13) Flush was Elizabeth's pet spaniel, to whom she was greatly attached. The dog was the subject of her poem To Flush, My Dog, in which she said of his ears, (to which she referred in a later letter to Mrs. Jameson which will be quoted shortly in the text):

Like a Lady's ringlets brown,
Flow thy silken ears adown
Either side demurely,
Elizabeth Barrett Barrett : Poems, (1889), p. 250

Virginia Woolf's Flush: A Biography described the relationship between Elizabeth and Robert Browning, from the ever-present

dog's point of view.

- (14) Elizabeth's reference was to a work by William Newnham, (1790-1865), entitled Human Magnetism, its claims to dispassionate enquiry. Being an attempt to show the utility of its application for the relief of human suffering, (1845).

Newnham, a surgeon with a strong interest in occult and dream phenomena, also wrote Essay on Superstition; being an enquiry into the effects of physical influence on the mind, in the production of dreams, visions etc., (1830).

His most curious work, however, was Some Observations on the medicinal and dietic properties of Green Tea, (1827).

Newnham was an early member of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association, later the British Medical Association. He was also a religious writer. As far as I have been able to ascertain, his second wife, Caroline, (née Atkinson), was no relation of Henry George Atkinson.

- (15) Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1845-6, (1899), ed. R. W. B. Browning, i, p. 432. From now on this work will be cited as Letters of R. and E. B. Browning.

- (16) Charles Knight, (1791-1873), author and publisher, made Harriet's acquaintance early in the 1840's and began to publish his series of Weekly Volumes largely at her suggestion.

In 1848 he started a weekly periodical called The Voice of the People to which she contributed. It failed after only three weeks, however, according to Harriet, because of Whig interference.

Harriet completed for him the History of the Thirty Years Peace, 1815-1845, (Autobiography, ii, p.4), which he had already begun to publish, and she extended it, taking the history back to 1800. This was the last work of general literature to bear Knight's imprint.

- (17) J. Drummond and C. B. Upton: The Life and Letters of James Martineau, (1902), i, p. 120.
- (18) Captain John James, formerly a soldier in the 90th Light Infantry, was the author of Mesmerism, with hints for beginners, (1879). It was he who first introduced the Rev George Sandby to Mesmerism. Sandby dedicated his Mesmerism and its Opponents, (1848), to Captain James, and in that work described James' activities as a practising mesmerist at Dover, (p. 145).
- (19) John Ashburner wrote several works on Mesmerism, including Notes and Studies in the Philosophy of Animal Magnetism and Spiritualism, (1867), and On the connection between mesmerism and spiritualism, (1859).
- (20) Marion Lochhead: Elizabeth Rigby, Lady Eastlake, (1961), p. 146.
- Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, (1809-1893), was the daughter of Dr. Edward Rigby of Norwich. She became an authoress and art critic. She married Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, (1793-1865), keeper of the National Gallery and President of the Royal Academy, in 1849.
- Lady Eastlake's criticism of Harriet and Mesmerism may well have been motivated by her religious views. T. Seccombe described her as, "Deeply but not ostentatiously religious, showing in every utterance and action her dislike of the morbid and the peculiar," Dictionary of National Biography, XXII, pp. 599-600.
- (21) Lady Eastlake: Journals and Correspondence, ed. Charles Eastlake Smith, (1895), i, p.152.
- (22) Diaries of William Charles Macready, 1833-1851, ed. William Toynbee, (1912), ii, p.276. The following reference is to this work.

William Charles Macready, (1793-1873), was the famous tragic actor; John Forster, (1812-1876), was a historian and biographer best known for his biography of Dickens. Professor William Gregory, (1803-1858), physician and Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh University,

was greatly interested in Mesmerism and wrote Letters to a Candid Inquirer on Animal Magnetism, (1851).

The work to which Macready referred, (in the quotation immediately following in the text), was Baron Carl von Reichenbach's Researches in Magnetism, (1850), which Gregory had in fact translated.

- (23) Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, 'The Later Years, iii, 1841-1850, (1939), p. 1236.

This work is later cited as Letters of W. and D. Wordsworth.

- (24) James Payn: Some Literary Recollections, (1884), p. 100.

The following quotation is from this work.

- (25) E. H. Dering : Memoirs of Georgiana, Lady Chatterton, with some passages from her diary, (1878), p. 95.

- (26) Jane Welsh Carlyle: Letters and Memorials, ed. J. A. Froude, (1883), ii, p. 25.

- (27) Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, formerly Phelan, née Browne, (1790-1846), wrote under the pseudonym 'Charlotte Elizabeth', producing innumerable religious works and tracts, and volumes of children's verse. Her Mesmerism: A Letter to Miss Martineau, was written from Blackheath on Dec. 10th, 1844. It was published as a sixteen-page booklet. All quotations from the work are from this edition.

Full of Biblical quotations and references, its evangelical hostility towards Mesmerism incurred the wrath of the Zoist. Dr John Elliotson denounced her as, "that most bitter, uncharitable, bigotted and ignorant writer, who fancied herself a Christian," (Zoist, Vol. 4, Mar. 1846 - Jan. 1847, pp. 331-332).

More broad-minded Christians who supported the curative merits of Mesmerism, also attacked her. In Mesmerism and its Opponents, (1848), the Rev. George Sandby, speaking of so-called 'magnetic wonders', deplored Charlotte Elizabeth, who, he said, "considers them as diabolical 'invitations' devised by Satan to throw soul-

destroying doubts on the miracles of the Saviour", (p. ix; other references to her appeared on pp. 83-85, 242-244, 246).

- (28) Charlotte Brontë's Christianity was outraged neither by Harriet's Mesmerism, nor her later atheism. The two finally clashed over their contrasting views of love and female sexuality, as revealed in Charlotte's Villette, (1853), and Harriet's review of it, (Daily News, Feb. 3rd, 1853).

Edward Rea describes in detail the relationship between Charlotte Brontë and Harriet, and includes the correspondence between Harriet, Patrick Brontë and Charlotte's husband, Arthur Bell Nichols, after Charlotte's death in 1855. These letters form a part of the Birmingham Martineau collection. See A Study of Harriet Martineau, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, (1969), pp. 156-221.

- (29) Mrs. Gaskell: The Life of Charlotte Brontë, (1857), Everyman edtn. (1971), p. 327.

Mrs. Gaskell was quoting from a letter, the recipient of which, as usual, she did not identify, but who was probably Ellen Nussey.

The "forthcoming work" to which Charlotte referred was not Letters on Mesmerism, which had already appeared, (1844-5), but Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), which will be discussed in Chapter 5. The "other subjects", Harriet's handling of which seems to have given Charlotte a sense of foreboding, were of course Religion, Scripture, the Church, etc.

- (30) Margaret Lane: The Brontë Story, (1969), pp. 272-273.

Charlotte's deeper involvement in Mesmerism than Harriet's account implies is likely to be accurate, if slightly exaggerated; she was, after all, an enthusiast. Charlotte clearly had no wish to become involved in a mesmeric controversy, hence her understatement of her mesmeric experience in the letter quoted by Mrs. Gaskell.

However, since Mrs. Gaskell did not quote from the one Harriet

clearly wrote to her, but from one of Charlotte's, a suppression of the truth may well be implied. This would be understandable: Mrs. Gaskell's husband, a Unitarian minister, was a colleague of James Martineau who, as has been seen, was strongly opposed to Harriet's Mesmerism; Mrs. Gaskell would therefore be anxious to prevent it from appearing that Charlotte was of Harriet's persuasion regarding Mesmerism, in opposition to her own husband, William Gaskell. The incidents relating to Charlotte Bronte have been included here and not in Chapter 7, because they involve a comment on Harriet's cure, they occurred soon after it, and they are too closely related to Harriet to be reserved until the later chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR : HENRY GEORGE ATKINSON, HIS INFLUENCE UPON HARRIET
MARTINEAU, I

When Harriet's mesmeric 'cure' was discussed, (Chapter 2), mention was made of Henry George Atkinson, the phrenologist and mesmerist, who played an important role in that 'cure', a friend of Harriet's friends the Basil Montagus,, who suggested she should try Mesmerism. He was the expert who, through them, suggested the appointment of Mrs. Wynard to continue the mesmeric treatment of Harriet begun by S. T. Hall.

Following the 'cure', Atkinson came to play a major - indeed a dominant and sinister - part in Harriet's life. J. C. Nevill describes it as "a strange ascendancy," (J. C. Nevill, p. 86), and Mrs. Wheatley observes: "One of the few unsolved riddles of Harriet's life is why she ever allowed herself to become mentally subservient ... to Henry Atkinson," (V. Wheatley, p. 296). Mrs. Wheatley implies an overt sexual relationship, something which Mrs. Miller had already suggested:

... he had become dear to her by virtue of that personal attraction which is not altogether dependent upon merit, but which enhances such merits as may be possessed by the object of the attachment, and somewhat confuses the relationship on the intellectual side ... Mr. Atkinson was many years younger than his friend, and very likely she never fully realised the depth of her own feelings towards him, (F.F. Miller, p. 157).

Mrs. Miller's suggestion is as explicit as is possible in the circumstances; in 1884, when her biography of Harriet appeared, James Martineau and Atkinson were both still alive. Atkinson died in 1884, but he was clearly still alive when Mrs. Miller wrote the above words; she acknowledged him in her Preface for allowing her to peruse his private correspondence from Harriet, (F.F. Miller, pp. vii and viii), and did not refer to his being dead at the time of writing. Mrs. Miller's suggestion regarding the Harriet-Atkinson relationship was daring too where James Martineau was concerned. He lived until 1900, and was swift enough to object to other statements of Mrs. Miller's: in 'The Early Days of Harriet Martineau', (Daily News, Dec. 30th, 1884), he rejected Mrs. Miller's description of Harriet's mother's severity and insensibility

towards her daughter, (see note 1, Chapter 2).

On the other hand, R. K. Webb believes the Harriet-Atkinson relationship to have been more or less entirely intellectual and 'platonic'. His reasons for believing this are questionable, and will be discussed later, (they are based on speculations that both Harriet and Atkinson were homosexual), but the assertion of a purely intellectual relationship is stated: "The friendship of a motherly woman in her middle forties for a young man just turned thirty developed rapidly into an intimate intellectual collaboration", (R. K. Webb, p. 19).

Harriet first met Atkinson on her way to Ambleside for the summer in 1845, the year following the 'cure'. She visited some friends at Lenton, near Nottingham, (Autobiography, i, p. 488), where Atkinson happened to arrive as a house-guest. Harriet wrote that she, "saw him turn the corner into the lane, talking with the gardener who was conveying his carpet-bag", (Autobiography, i, p. 490).

Apparently Atkinson looked older than his thirty or so years. Harriet was impressed by his "perfect gentlemanliness." He was handsome, cultured, and gifted, and, although not reserved, had a certain air of detachment that increased his attractiveness. He and Harriet walked together in the grounds of the house. His conversation greatly surprised her:

As we walked up and down a green alley in the garden, he astonished and somewhat confused me by saying how great he thought the mistake of thinking so much and so artificially as people are for ever striving to do about death and about living again," (Autobiography, i, p. 492-493).

He asked Harriet what it could signify whether we, with our own individual consciousness, ever lived again? Harriet was obviously astonished: "Not having yet by any means got out of the atmosphere of selfishness which is the very life of Christian doctrine ... I was amazed at his question", (Autobiography, i, p. 493).

She retorted by asking in return what could signify so much as

immortality and the survival of the individual personality. Atkinson replied that our duty is to concern ourselves with our present intellectual development and the affairs of everyday life, not to waste time and energy in spurious conjectures about a future state which, by its very nature, is in any case impenetrable.

Atkinson's ideas in this respect, stressing practicality as opposed to theoretical speculation, relate to the mesmerists' social ideas of positivism, utilitarianism and social action, (see Chapter 1), and may have anticipated Harriet's later interest in Comteanism. In view of Atkinson's ethic of practicality, it is ironic that his only major work, Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (see Chapter 5), written in collaboration with Harriet, is philosophically futile and pretentious in theme and argument.

It is clear that the initial encounter between Harriet and Atkinson greatly disturbed the former. She wrote: "With grave interest, and an uneasy concern, I talked this over afterwards with my hostess... I soon perceived that this outspoken doctrine was in full agreement with the action of my mind for some years," (Autobiography, i, p. 493).

In view of the obviously immense impact which Atkinson had on Harriet, and his influence on her thoughts and beliefs, her own protestations concerning the relationship seem somewhat untruthful. A study of some of her friends' letters concerning her shows clearly the change in her thinking following the encounter with Atkinson, above all in the sphere of religion; this subject will be discussed fully in Chapter 5.

Little is known of Atkinson's early life. As Mrs. Bosanquet says, he was and still is completely unknown outside his relationship with Harriet. Mrs. Bosanquet says: "he left no name for anything beyond his connection with Harriet Martineau," (T. Bosanquet, p. 159).

Atkinson was born about 1815, (1), and died in 1884. The second son of the architect William Atkinson, (c. 1773-1839; see annotation note 23, Chapter 6), he was elected a fellow to the Geological Society in 1836, remaining a member until 1877. He served on the governing committee of the Art Union, a body devoted to popularising the fine arts, (R. K. Webb, p. 20). He died a comparatively wealthy man, leaving £10,000.

He seems to have been an impressive enough person, with an attractive personality, patient temperament and handsome appearance. Margaret Fuller, who met him in 1846, wrote of him:

In Westmoreland, I knew, and have since been seeing in London, a man, such as would interest you a good deal; Mr --. He is sometimes called the 'prince of the English mesmerisers'; and he has the fine instinctive nature you may suppose from that. He is a man of about thirty; in the fulness of his powers; tall, and finely formed, with a head for Leonardo to paint; mild and composed, but powerful and sagacious; he does not think, but perceives and acts. He is intimate with artists, having studied architecture himself as a profession, but has some fortune on which he lives. Sometimes stationary and acting in the affairs of other men; sometimes wandering about the world and learning; he seems bound by no tie, yet looks as if he had children in every place."(2).

Madeleine B. Stern described how Margaret Fuller found Harriet unwilling to discuss her relationship with Atkinson, whom Margaret found more interesting than Harriet herself;

Margaret was disappointed to see that though her friend's health had been restored, she herself seemed commonplace and was not at all disposed to discuss her excursions into the land of dreams whither she had been led by Mr. Atkinson."(3)

Atkinson seems to have been generally regarded as having little interest in wordly pursuits, and a certain air of mystery about him increased his fascination. James Martineau's biographers mistook this for a mystical quality, and wrote: "Mr. Atkinson seems to have had a sort of mystical element in him."(4). Atkinson's lack of interest in materialistic pursuits should not be taken as an indication that he was impractical. He was neither ethereal nor unearthly, as his comments on first meeting Harriet

reveal. He was interested in practical philosophy as opposed to commerce and business.

Margaret Fuller's interest in the fitness of Atkinson's head as a subject for Leonardo da Vinci is interesting in view of the fact that he was a phrenologist. Harriet kept a bust of him before the chimney-piece in her Ambleside home, ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 384), as well as a protrait of him. Her views of Atkinson's appearance were decidedly elevated, as James Payn, the novelist, (1830-1898), described:

In her study was the portrait of a scientific gentleman she greatly honoured, but who in my humble judgement influenced her mind for evil, and injured her reputation as a writer and thinker exceedingly. She asked me one day of whom the picture (to me unknown) reminded me. It was a striking countenance enough, full of restrained enthusiasm: but as it happened I remembered no one like it. 'Look again', she said, 'you surely must see the resemblance.' I hazarded 'Robespierre'. It was most unfortunate, for as it turned out she saw a most striking likeness in the portrait to the founder of the Christian religion.(5)

Payn was not the only person to be baffled by this question. Barbara Charlton visited Harriet in 1854, and wrote:

I went to one of her great tea parties at the Knoll and was introduced to her friend and admirer, Mr. Atkinson, a zealous exponent of mesmerism. She asked me whether I did not consider Mr. H. G. Atkinson the perfect image of Christ and I was mightily puzzled for a suitable reply.(6).

Charlotte Brontë, who, Mrs. Chapman wrote, "saw Mr. Atkinson," ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 403), found him too cold and suave.

She wrote:

Your account of Mr. A-^{Atkinson} tallies exactly with Miss M-^{Marineau}'s. She, too, said that placidity and mildness (rather than originality and power) were his external characteristics. She described him as a combination of the antique Greek sage with the ^{emancipated} modern man of science. Perhaps it was mere perversity in me to get the notion that torpid veins, and a cold, slow-beating heart, lay under his marble outside. But he is a materialist: he ^{even} ~~severely~~ denies us our hope of Immortality, and quietly blots from man's future Heaven and the Life to come. That is why a savour of bitterness seasoned my feeling towards him."(7).

The Winkworth sisters seem to have had an unfavourable impression

of Atkinson. They believed that his effect upon Harriet was adverse.

Susanna Winkworth, writing of the period 1845-1847, said of Harriet:

At this date, though she had been introduced to Mr. Atkinson, she had not as yet fallen under his deteriorating influence, but she was very full of stories about mesmerism, and very busy endeavouring to impart to others the benefits she had herself received from it, so that that was a frequent subject of conversation at her house.(8)

Mrs. Chapman herself seems to have had an elevated opinion of Atkinson. She wrote: "Mr. Atkinson, though so rapid in thought, was pre-eminently a thinker; possessing that faculty of clear, methodical explanation of the essence, the nature, and the qualities of things, that Plato rates so highly," ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 410), and:

Mr. Atkinson was a gentleman and a scholar, and a remarkably able, high-minded, and true-hearted man, esteemed by all who knew him, and spoken of with high respect as a devoted student of science, and also for his reverential tone of mind, by other reviews adverse to his opinions, ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 429).

~~and~~ The Rev. George Sandby wrote of him:

Mr. Atkinson is not a member of the medical profession, but has devoted himself to philosophy and science. His acquirements are of the very highest order .., while in Mesmerism, his power is equally strange and wondrous. He is so calm, so gentle, and yet so firm, that it is a perfect study to watch him in the management of a case. How often have I seen him with the most unwearied patience, devoting the whole energies of his powerful mind to the amelioration of suffering... Never were philosophy and humanity more beautifully united.(9)

Whatever the different responses to Atkinson as a man, it is primarily his intellectual prowess that is questionable, and hence his amazing influence over Harriet. Mrs. Wheatley says of him: "his brain was a jumble of phrenology, mesmerism, some genuine scientific knowledge and a few rational conclusions," (V. Wheatley, p. 297).

Mrs. Bosanquet discusses Atkinson's earnest desire to serve science and his strong sense of responsibility to the scientific world, but concludes that his keen and genuine interests in science resulted in little, because they were "undirected by any adequately trained or educated intelligence," (T. Bosanquet, p. 159).

Atkinson had an obsessive belief that Baconian theory would solve any problem that might be encountered. Mrs. Bosanquet cites especially Bacon's denial of metaphysical reasoning, (which anticipated Atkinson's positivist materialism), and his belief that Nature yields the answers to her own problems if properly interrogated, (T. Bosanquet, p. 159). Of course, Atkinson's Baconianism was, like most ^{of} his views, compatible with mesmeric orthodoxy: the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, referring to Mesmer's 'discovery' of the magnetic fluid, said that "since the time of that first great discovery, every step made in the science of Mesmerism has been through the Baconian method of induction. We have observed: we have recorded our observations"; another mesmeric enthusiast, Basil Montagu, was much interested in Bacon.(10).

It is strangely evident, however, that Harriet was aware of some of Atkinson's faults and inadequacies. She was surprised by his disregard of philosophers whom she valued, but humbly swallowed her surprise in deference to his superior perception. Moreover,

She told Lord Morpeth, (11), that Atkinson's mind was not logical, and that he held oddly incompatible opinions. She assured Kingsley that, although Atkinson was the soul of honour and too silent about what he had heard, she would not show him Kingsley's letters. When she read Margaret Fuller's remark that Atkinson was not a thinker, she was amused but said she could easily understand how Margaret Fuller could feel that way, (R. K. Webb, p. 21).

On the other hand, with 'outsiders', Harriet could be belligerently defensive of Atkinson. She wrote to Mr. Murray, editor of Men of the Times: "Mr. Atkinson is not a 'mesmerist', but a philosophical student, and a gentleman of independent fortune," ('Memorials', Autobiography, 11, p.405).

It is difficult to determine precisely how Harriet became subservient to Atkinson despite his obvious intellectual inferiority to herself. The answer is not that Harriet was necessarily in any sense romantically or sexually obsessed with Atkinson. Mrs. Bosanquet, Mrs. Wheatley and Mrs.

Miller all observe that her feelings for him were stronger than she would ever have admitted, or perhaps even realised. R. K. Webb's explanation of the relationship is even more complex and tortuous. He asserts that Atkinson was probably a homosexual and Harriet a lesbian, inferring that both felt relaxed and secure in an intensely close relationship which nevertheless excluded any possibility whatever of sexual pressure or entanglement on either side, because of the sexual orientation of both partners in totally opposite directions. R. K. Webb says that Atkinson was "very probably a homosexual", (R. K. Webb, p. 20). His speculation is based on four 'proofs' which seem highly dubious: Atkinson's "circumstances"; his friendships; his "mysterious visits abroad", and the "frantic moral relativism of his writings": All of these are highly questionable as proofs of anything at all; homosexuality does seem to be an obsession of R.K. Webb's. He says of Harriet: "It would be a guess with more than a little justification that Miss Martineau was latently homosexual," (R.K. Webb, p. 51). Again, his 'justification' is inconclusive. It is based on Harriet's neurotic sexual uncertainties as revealed during her engagement to John Hugh Worthington, (see Chapter 2), and the intensity of her friendships with women. Certainly she seemed especially attached to women - her maids, Mrs. Wynard, her somnambule Jane, her nieces, her 'literary' friends - Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot, Margaret Fuller, Mrs. Jameson, Mrs. Chapman etc. - but, in an age of more rigid social barriers between men and women, when women were more often forced into closer association with their own sex, little, surely, can be deduced from this.

Harriet did behave neurotically during her youthful engagement; again, however, the reasons for this are probably historical, at a time when fewer women understood their own physiology, and many knew little about sexual relationships and what was expected of a wife and a lover. Myths about marriage terrified many young fiancées, and unlike R.K. Webb I am unwilling to attribute Harriet's neurotic response to Worthington to a

clear-cut case of lesbianism. Harriet certainly made a curious statement to Mrs. Jameson during the sick-room period; Mrs. Jameson wrote of her to Lady Byron in 1842: "She said she had never been in love - knew not what it was - except thro' imagination and sympathy,"(12), but this could be as strong an indication of asexuality as of homosexuality.

One should also remember that the circumstances of the engagement occurred at a traumatic period of Harriet's life, when she suffered a series of domestic and emotional crises, (see Chapter 2).

Louis Cazamian offers a far more convincing explanation than lesbianism for Harriet's neurotic behaviour during the engagement. Referring to her deafness, inability to taste and smell etc., he says: "this deprivation of sensory pleasure in her life was matched by a lack of emotion."(13). It is indeed possible that, in her own individual case, the severing of the usual channels of personal sensory experience and communication produced in Harriet an inability to respond emotionally.

As for Atkinson, his pronouncements on the subject of human love appear heterosexual - although, again, at this time little can be deduced from that. In discussing the various phrenological areas of the brain, he wrote: "That love which is the desire of union with the opposite sex, is the central organ of the cerebrum," (my emphasis), and he referred to "Love, or the desire of Union - marriage - the blending and sympathy of two minds in one existence."(14).

Generally speaking, most critics seize too readily on the suggestions of Harriet's lesbianism. Robert Lee Wolff wryly observes:

Harriet Martineau tells us that she felt the need to submit ... to her mother's care; and, during her later and graver illness, to the Mesmeric passes - not so much of her male mesmerist, who was comparatively ineffective - but of her less experienced maid, and finally of her 'dearly' loved female mesmerist."(15)

Victoria Glendinning, supporting Wolff, hints at this assumption of Harriet's lesbianism. She says that Mrs. Wynard lived with Harriet,

who was consequently, "enjoying a relationship laced with what would now be labelled lesbianism and masochism." (16).

Edward Rea, on the other hand, questions Harriet's lesbianism, while appearing to support the notion of Atkinson's homosexuality, observing: "R. K. Webb thinks him a homosexual, and his friendship with an elderly and relatively sexless woman is therefore intelligible." (17).

Personally, I do not believe that any attempt to explain the Atkinson-Harriet relationship, (especially Harriet's subservience), in sexual terms is of great value. The solution is probably simpler and more obvious than this. It may well be that Harriet was unconsciously in love, or infatuated, with Atkinson; it may be that either or both of the parties was or were homosexual and consequently felt 'safe' to allow the relationship to become as intimate as it did. However, it seems to me that Harriet's dependence on Atkinson and intellectual subjection to him can be attributed directly to the mesmeric 'cure': Harriet was, at times, in agonizing pain, an apparently incurable invalid, heavily sedated, waiting only to die. She was then suddenly and dramatically 'cured', (or so it seemed), by Mesmerism, and her life changed completely into that of a pain-free, active, energetic and vital woman. She then met Atkinson, one of the principal exponents of the 'science' that she believed had saved and transformed her life; Atkinson, the man who had contributed so much to her cure and re-vitalised existence, the friend of the Basil Montagus who had advocated Mesmerism to her, and the man who recommended Mrs. Wynard, a mesmerist whom Harriet found entirely satisfactory; Atkinson, a young and attractive man, who may well have been expounding theological views that she was slowly drifting towards when they met. In view of all this, should one not rather be surprised had Harriet not become obsessed with Atkinson - even if the disturbing extent of this obsession, involving an intellectual subjection,

still cannot readily be explained? The circumstances in the case suggest a close parallel with the Empress Alexandra's subjection to the monk Rasputin. (18). As Harriet herself wrote of her debt to Atkinson: "I owe my recovery mainly to him, - that my ten last happy years have been his gift to me." (Autobiography, i, p. 489).

I think that Harriet's obsession with Mesmerism can be accounted for in the same way. Had the doubters and scoffers been on their death-beds, as she had been, and had they then been suddenly and dramatically cured, (if only seemingly so), it is possible that they, too, would have reacted as obsessively as she did, however mistaken and absurd such a reaction may have been.

Be all this as it may, it is true that, sexually involved or not, no such accusation of that nature seems ever to have been directed at the relationship during their lifetime. Mrs. Bosanquet says: "their friendship ... was for a time notorious without ever attracting a breath of scandal," (T. Bosanquet, p. 161); J. C. Nevill, noting that the relationship lasted from 1845 for thirty-one years until Harriet's death in 1876, observes that it was, "all these years untarnished by the slightest breath of scandal." (J.C. Nevill, p. 119).

The relationship between Harriet and Atkinson seems to have involved the mesmerist's increasing domination of the recently successful 'cure'. Mrs. Bosanquet describes the gradual undermining of Harriet's religious beliefs, and her increasing dependence upon Atkinson. (T. Bosanquet, p. 156-157).

Atkinson seems to have grown up in an atmosphere of phrenological interest. His father studied the subject, (see annotation note 23, Chapter 6), and phrenology and Mesmerism were closely related, (see Chapter 1). It was, therefore, both in the spheres of Mesmerism and phrenology

that Atkinson operated, and Harriet, too, became involved in the two subjects.

She was both a mesmeric operator and a subject. After visiting her friends at Lenton in 1845, where she first met Atkinson, she proceeded in 1846 to Waterhead, where her landlady asked her if sick neighbours could conceivably benefit from Mesmerism. (Autobiography, i, p. 513). Harriet, confronted by this challenge, and anxious to prove the 'truth' of Mesmerism in practice, (as she had argued for the cause factually in Letters on Mesmerism, and may have argued for it fictionally, I believe, in Two True Stories on Clairvoyance, see Chapter 6), welcomed visits from these neighbours. She mesmerised them, thought she had some influence over them, and that her patients were better for it. Sometimes she had seven of them lying entranced around her sitting-room, (Autobiography, i, p.513). A nursemaid employed by the ladies at Waterhead in whose house Harriet lodged, suffered from severe nervous headaches. Harriet mesmerised her, and she became so peaceful that her mistresses were reminded by her of Dickens' Little Nell,(19), and the girl, until finally cured, became known by that name, (Autobiography, i, p. 514). Harriet also related the pathetic story of a consumptive youth whom she believed she had cured, but who later relapsed. She naively ascribed his deterioration to a damp cottage and the weather, (Autobiography, i, pp. 513-514). Finally, she related the case of a doctor who allowed an elderly patient to consult Harriet. However, the old lady decided that all mesmeric cures were diabolical, and she declined, saying: "they do say that the lady does it through the Old 'Un," (Autobiography, i, p. 515).

Another of Harriet's curious anecdotes concerning Mesmerism described events which occurred in 1845, when, she said: "My sister was mesmerizing a little boy," when, "I ... put my hand in, and made mischief." It seems that Harriet placed her ear-trumpet in the child's ear and spoke through it, which caused him to become deaf. She alone could retrieve his hearing,

she said, when she "was instructed what to do", (Letters on the Laws, etc., p. 67).

At this time she and Atkinson were frequently together. On one occasion they were walking a great distance together along the Rydal road, when they met Wordsworth, who warned Atkinson: "Take care! take care! Don't let her carry you about. She is killing off half the gentlemen in the county," (Autobiography, i, p. 507); Wordsworth's amusing comment was inspired by Harriet's reputation as an astonishingly energetic walker.

Harriet assisted Atkinson at séances, where he and others investigated the behaviour of mesmerised subjects. The phreno-mesmerists believed that stimulation of various organs of the brain provoked appropriate responses.

Some of these séances were widely discussed by Harriet's friends and acquaintances. One of them involved Lord Morpeth, (see Note 11). Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote to Mrs. Martin in Jan., 1845:

I must tell you ... Mr. Kenyon has read to me an extract from a private letter addressed by Harriet Martineau to Moxon the publisher, to the effect that Lord Morpeth was down on his knees in the middle of the room a few nights ago, in the presence of the somnambule J and conversing with her in Greek and Latin, that the four Miss Liddells were also present, and that they five talked to her during one séance in five foreign languages, viz. Latin, Greek, French, Italian and German.(20).

Elizabeth passed this information on to Miss Mitford who, in turn, conveyed it to Miss Jephson:

Everybody is talking of Miss Martineau's Somnambule. She writes to Miss Barrett, who forwards her letters to me. The last intelligence is, Lord Morpeth was on his knees the other evening, talking Greek and Latin, and three modern languages to the poor girl ... For my own part, I see no good in these experiments; while they will certainly destroy the innocent contentment of the patient, thus forced upon that miserable pinnacle called notoriety. Charlotte Elizabeth has addressed a letter to Miss Martineau, in which she attributes the agency to Satan.(21).

Harriet was herself mesmerised by two people simultaneously, and broke into rhythmic utterance. A short-hand writer was employed to take down the speeches. These were never published, but Harriet said:

"those fragments are wholly unlike any thing I have ever said under any other circumstances," (Autobiography, i, p. 515).

Atkinson warned her not to assume that the voice of trance was the voice of Eternal Truth. He was perhaps aware of the sub-conscious mind possibly being 'projected' into the conscious mind during trance-states. F.W.H. Myers held such a view, (see Chapter 3). Atkinson told Harriet that the human mind, "is subject to all manner of spectral illusions, presumptuous and vain conceits, which may be well termed a kind of normal or infantine madness" (Autobiography, ii, p. 76).

Harriet, however, appears to have believed that her attitude towards the phenomenon was calm, objective and scientific, although her concept of her own trance experiences was strange and unearthly. She wrote:

Nothing in the experience of my life can at all compare with that of seeing the melting away of the forms, aspects and arrangements under which we ordinarily view nature, and its fusion into the system of forces which is presented to the intellect in the magnetic state. But there is no use in dwelling on an experience which is, from its nature, incommunicable, (Letters on the Laws, etc. p. 122).

Her elevated view of the importance of 'trance-sensations' can, again, be attributed to her understandable subjectivity, based on her 'cure'.

Atkinson, however, revealed his contrasting caution in his reply to Harriet:

... of course, we must... consider whether it is not likely to be a delusion of the senses; or rather a delusion of the mind when the senses are at rest as in the case, we will say, of the gentleman who thought himself an indestructible atom, and that the cricket-bats and balls were all indestructible atoms," (Letters on the Laws etc., p. 152)

As Mrs. Bosanquet says, Atkinson was anticipating, "the hypothesis of the 'unconscious self' so familiar to later psychologists," (T. Bosanquet, p. 178).(22).

Harriet's increasing involvement in Mesmerism became widely known. She received much correspondence from people desiring her opinion as to whether or not Mesmerism would cure their own maladies.

Of course, Harriet had received such letters, including many

from mesmerist-doctors, from an early stage after the 'cure'. In 1845 she wrote:

There is a remarkable uniformity in the letters I have received from medical gentlemen, from various parts of the country, each believing himself almost the only one who has ventured upon the practice of Mesmerism ... I privately register the names and addresses of such as have written to me," (Letters on Mesmerism, 'Preface', pp. vii and viii)

On March 15th, 1845, she wrote from Birmingham, "and the sick and their doctors write to me - a multitude of them," ('Memorials', Autobiography, 11, pp. 361-362).

More extraordinary than these were letters she received relating to the clairvoyant aspects of Mesmerism - for instance, from those hoping to trace lost valuables by means of mesmeric clairvoyance. Others made various references to Mesmerism in their letters.

I shall now quote from a number of letters in the Birmingham University Library collection of Harriet Martineau Correspondence which illustrate aspects of her correspondence on mesmeric matters. To my knowledge this material has not been published before. I add explanatory notes in each case; all of these letters are holographs.

(1) HM 1030: Part of a letter from L. Witherley to Harriet, Dec. 23rd, 1850

The letter begins with a discussion of a planned 'home for ladies', and continues :-

I am just now able to do but little, and am trusting principally to nature for the recovery of my lost powers. Mesmerism has been recommended but one or two experiments have been discouraging, because instead of soothing my nerves I have found the passes too stimulating and exciting. If I could meet with some one with a knowledge of the science⁽¹⁾ with whom I could board for a time, who would undertake to try, by very short frequent⁽¹¹⁾ and gentle operations to bring my nerves to bear the passes, I think it very possible that I might be greatly benefitted but that is a matter difficult to accomplish...

L. Witherley played no major part in Harriet's life. The early part

(1) 'with a knowledge of the science' is an insertion in the same hand.
(11) 'frequent' was also an insertion.

of this letter is concerned with plans for a 'home for ladies', (the name of which therefore suggests it was more likely to have been a home for the elderly than for reformed prostitutes), implying that Witherley was someone whom Harriet came to know in the course of her social activities.

His or her address was 5, Summit Place, Upper Clapton; Upper Clapton was a suburb of London, "in Hackney borough."(23).

(2) HM 114: Letter from Helen Brown to Harriet, May 13th, 1857

Helen Brown's husband had recently died, and it seems that she had lost a desk containing some of his papers which were to have been published. She was deeply anxious to recover the desk, hence her reference to her son, (then still a child), helping her at some future date, and to consulting a 'medium' - presumably to discover from her husband's 'spirit' the whereabouts of the missing documents.

My dear friend,

I have been quite unable to answer your last welcome letter till today, yet I fear the delay must have appeared to you somewhat like carelessness. If you could see my circumstances and my heart you would not blame me.

I cannot express the gratitude I feel to you for the interest you take in my difficulties and for the advice you so generously and frankly give me.

Your first suggestion did not startle me for I had long been resolved on trying what could be done through a somnambule. For some time I have been endeavouring to get information of any such but without success as yet. I once thought of asking Mr. Atkinson to help me, but shrunk from forcing my confidence on him - feeling as I strongly do that it is not a matter to be talked about or made public, not on my account, but for Samuel's sake in case the attempt should fail. I can get no help in Edinburgh, in this direction at least. My intention when I received your letter was to get Mrs. Crowe (who goes to London this week from Malvern) to make enquiries for me in the South, and if she found a suitable somnambule to manage it for me. I thought that if the patient was put into rapport with the person who packed up the desk etc., and with the contents of it and (i) the box (the whole is missing)(ii) by means of Samuel's handwriting, that a sufficient clue would be given. Do you not think so? I had not thought of trying a 'medium' simply because I was not aware that their revelations ever related to such practical and merely terrestrial affairs as lost packages, however valuable they might be. Have you

(i) 'it and' was inserted by Helen Brown.

(ii) 'the box (the whole is missing)' was also inserted.

known anything of the kind done by them - or any light thrown on such a mystery? I both heard and saw a good deal of the 'Rappings' in London and was much interested in the whole subject. I certainly would not object to getting help from a 'Medium' and will never shrink on account of the pain great though it might be.

I shall use every means I can hear or think of to find the desk. There being nothing of value in it to any but ourselves, renders it likely that, if stolen, it has long ere now been destroyed; but as you suggest I think I shall apply for advice to the head of the detective force here. It can do no harm at all events. But even if it is never found I shall not despair of accomplishing my aim. The more I examine the papers I have the more I am convinced that nearly all will be made available, and sooner or later it shall be done 'even if I have to wait till my son can help me'. I wish I could tell you how much good these words of yours have done me. Many a time I had said them to myself but your saying them was like an assurance from Heaven! I am indeed very thankful I told you everything, for your advice and sympathy and, above all, your approval have given me - new life and hope. Your kindness to me has been very great and I am deeply sensible of it all - while I live I shall never forget it.

I trust the amelioration in your state continues. I often desire, I fear selfishly, that your life may be prolonged. I doubt not it would be a blessing to many besides me.

Give my love to Maria, and to Susan when you or M. may be writing. I trust they will derive every advantage they hope and expect from the change.

Dear friend you have my best wishes and my true love and gratitude.

Ever faithfully yours
Helen Brown

The children are pretty well now and as merry as ever. They call your picture "the good lady". I overheard them giving names to all that are in the room today - Sammy has long since chosen yours as his peculiar property.

P.S. I cannot well explain why I cannot ask Mr. Chambers to help me without seeming to complain of a (i) want of friendliness on his part (ii) and I have no wish to do that. But there are very few indeed that I could bear to be indebted to in such a matter and he is not one, although I have a most sincere regard for him and am assured of his goodwill and kindly feeling to us.

H.B.

I must not omit to mention that my confidence in ultimately succeeding is shared by one of Samuel's early assistants who knows his manner of working and is bound to help me whenever I have the means of working.

(1) 'a' was inserted by Helen Brown, as was (ii) 'on his part'

Helen Brown was the wife of Dr. Samuel Brown, (1817-1856), of Edinburgh. Harriet made friends with them on a visit to Scotland in 1838, and they remained friends until Dr. Brown's death. Harriet and Helen Brown continued the friendship until Harriet, too, died.

Brown graduated M.D. from Edinburgh University in 1839, and devoted himself to chemical research. He retired from public life in 1843 on failing to secure the chair of Chemistry at Edinburgh after being unable to establish the proposition of the isomerism of carbon and silicon. In 1846, however, Margaret Fuller wrote: "In Edinburgh, I met Dr. Brown. He is still quite a young man, but with a high ambition, and, I should think, commensurate powers. But all is yet in the bud with him", (Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli, iii, p. 96).

Dr. Brown thought very highly of Harriet, ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 389), and following Harriet's death, Helen Brown wrote to Mrs. Chapman:

I wish ... that I could tell you all that Harriet Martineau was to my husband, and to me and my children since his death ... I need not tell you of our unbroken intercourse during the last twenty years. She was more than a sister to me, ('Memorials' Autobiography, ii, p. 583).

Mrs. Brown referred to several people in her letter :-

- (i) 'Mrs. Crowe' is almost certainly a reference to Mrs. Catherine Crowe, nee Stevens, (1800?- 1876). She was a minor novelist, author of Susan Hopley (1841), Lilly Dawson, (1847), and The Night Side of Nature, (1848).

The tone of Mrs. Brown's reference suggests that Harriet knew who 'Mrs. Crowe' was, and Catherine Crowe was certainly known to both Harriet and Atkinson. Atkinson criticised her The Night Side of Nature, saying:

In our friend Mrs. Crowe's very interesting and ingenious book, 'The Night Side of Nature', she sets out with the assumption that Mind is a spiritual entity, separate from the body; and in consequence, a pervading fallacy is introduced into her reasoning, and it becomes but the ghost of reasoning, (Letters on the Laws etc., p. 138).

Catherine Crowe, like the Browns, was a resident of Edinburgh; Adeline Sergeant wrote: "She married Colonel Crowe in 1822, and took

up her residence with him in Edinburgh." (24). In fact it was through Catherine Crowe that Harriet met the Browns. Harriet wrote of her Edinburgh visit of 1838:

One of the noticeable things about it was that it introduced me to Mrs. Crowe, whose acquaintance has since yielded me very great pleasure. And she, again, has been the main cause or occasion of my friendship with Dr. Samuel Brown and his wife, who have been intimates of my latest years," (Autobiography, i, p. 435).

Mrs. Crowe was very interested in the supernatural, as her fiction reveals. She also wrote Spiritualism and the Age we live in, (1859), and Adeline Sergeant observed: "If Mrs. Crowe had lived in these days, she would have found herself in intimate relations with the Society for Psychical Research," (Sergeant, p. 152); the Society was not founded until 1882.

(ii) Mrs. Brown also referred in her letter to 'Maria' and 'Susan', who were Harriet's nieces. Maria Martineau, (d. 1864), was her companion-secretary, the daughter of Harriet's third brother, Robert Martineau, (1798-1870), a Birmingham brass-founder; Susan Martineau, (1826-1894), was his eldest daughter.

(iii) Helen Brown's reference to 'Mr. Chambers' was probably referring to either of the brothers Robert, (1802-1871), or William Chambers, (1800-1883). They were Edinburgh publishers of, among other things, Chamber's Journal.

(iv) The reference to 'the Rappings' is certainly to the spiritualistic rappings that had caused a great deal of interest since the emergence of the phenomenon at the Fox home in Hydesville in 1848, (see Chapter 6, annotation note 45). Many mesmerists rejected the validity of the phenomenon of spirit-rapping, including the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend in Mesmerism Proved True, (1854), pp. 193 -208.

The letter is written from 'Canaan Grove', presumably in Edinburgh.

(3) HM 429: Letter from Sara Hennell to Harriet, Sunday, June 24th, 1860

The letter begins with an account of Sara Hennell's return from a holiday in Penmaenmawr, Caernarvonshire. Referring to Atkinson's theories, her own ideas of Nature and positive philosophy, she continued:

... I have sometimes longed to shut my eyes and pretend I was talking in mesmeric vision ... It seems to me that the sort of vague, visionary meditation with wh I have written, is indeed the only style possible where the mind is stretching forward to matters beyond what is yet admitted on solid ground so far...

Proceeding to a discussion of her own difficulties in writing, she concluded by commenting on Darwinism.

Sara Sophia Hennell, (1812-1899), was the seventh child of James Hennell, (1782-1816), and Eliza Marshall, (1778-1858). Her younger sister Caroline or Cara, (1814-1905), married Charles Bray, who "shared Miss Martineau's faith in necessarianism and phrenology", (E. Rea, p. 245).

Sara Hennell was a governess with the Bonham-Carters, friends of Florence Nightingale, from 1832 to 1842. She met George Eliot in 1842, and was shocked by her liason with George Henry Lewes. Her relationship with George Eliot declined as her correspondence became increasingly abstract, (E. Rea, p. 229).

Speculating in theology, she wrote Christianity and Infidelity, (1857), Thoughts in Aid of Faith, (1860), The Early Christian anticipation of an approaching End of the World, (1860), Present Religion, (1865 and 1887), and On the Need of dogmas in Religion, (1874).

Edith Sitwell, who mistakenly stated that Sara, not Caroline Hennell married Charles Bray, said that both Bray and his father-in-law, Sara Hennell's father, were ribbon-manufacturers. She described Bray's interest in Phrenology, his having his head unnecessarily shaved for the taking of a phrenological 'cast', (to the great amusement of the local villagers), and his interest in a mesmerist named Lafontaine:

Mr. Bray financed a meeting in which it was hoped that Mr. Lafontaine would make evident his powers. Unfortunately, the meeting was a fiasco, because, although he succeeded in mesmerizing a young lady, he could not induce her to divulge the contents of a

book she had not read, and on which she was sitting, and this led to Mr. Lafontaine being denounced as an imposter, and to the audience yelling for their money to be returned to them.(25).

Sara Hennell's letter was written from Ivy Cottage, near Coventry.

(4) HM 42 : Letter from Thomas Squire Barrett to Harriet, March 1st, 1865

Dear Madam,

Two or three years ago, you kindly replied to an enquiry of mine as to where I could obtain a copy of the correspondence between you and Mr. Atkinson on the Laws of Man's Nature etc.

Since that time I have read and re-read the book several times; and am constantly referring to it. For my own convenience, therefore, I have got printed an Index to the book, a proof or two of which I send you. If you would like a few copies for yourself you are quite welcome. Or, if there be any alteration you would like made in it first, I will gladly get them made for you, if you will let me know before the type is distributed.

I have somewhere in my possession a kind letter written by you to either my grandfather or Uncle about mesmeric treatment for his wife. I suppose he had written to you first.

I think you are acquainted with a family of the name of Claude. I was at Queenwood College with Mr. Richard Claude, five or six years ago. It was a mutual Schoolfellow and friend of ours, Walter Flight (now studying at Heidelberg) who told me that the Claudes knew you. I have a brother and a cousin at Queenwood.

I am,
My dear Madam,
Yours very sincerely,
Thomas Squire Barrett.

Miss Harriet Martineau

The tone of this letter suggests that Barrett was not a close friend of Harriet. As far as can be ascertained he had no connection with the Rev. Dr. Barrett, whose mesmeric cures were reported in The Zoist, Vol. 12, (Apr. 1854- Jan. 1855), pp. 213 and 395; nor with Sir William Fletcher Barrett (1844-1925), one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, nor with Elizabeth Barrett (Browning) and her family.

Barrett refers to several people and places in his letter:-

- (1) "The Claudes" could be a reference to the family of Mary Sophia Claude, (a friend of Matthew Arnold who wrote children's verse and stories), who were resident in the Lake District.

(ii) Queenwood College, Hampshire, was a school founded by George Edmondson, (1798-1863), a pioneer educationalist, at Queenwood Hall which had been erected by the followers of Robert Owen. In 1842 Owen conducted his socialist experiment, 'Opening of the Millennium', which proved a failure, at Queenwood; Charles Bray, brother-in-law of Sara Hennell, (see previous letter), was among those who had attended.

The building had eight hundred acres of land attached to it, enabling Edmondson to teach agriculture there. He also set up a science and technical school. Queenwood College also had a carpenter's workshop and blacksmith's, and a printing-office. Among its teachers were Professors Tyndall, (1820-1893), Archer Hirst, Frankland, and Dr. H. Debus. Its most notable pupils were Henry Fawcett, (1833-1884), economist and statesman, M.P. and Post-master General, and Walter Flight.

(iii) Walter Flight, (1841-1885), also mentioned in Barrett's letter, was a notable mineralogist. He studied later at Halle, Heidelberg and Berlin, obtained his doctorate at London in 1867, and became famous for research into the mineral constituents of meteorites and their occluded gases, at the British Museum laboratory. He wrote many papers on the subject of meteorites, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1883.

(iv) Heidelberg University in Germany, founded in 1385, was attended by Walter Flight from 1865 to 1867.

The item which follows this letter in the Harriet Martineau Collection, catalogued HM 43, is a note enclosed with "a packet of Indexes" to 'The Laws of Man's Nature and Development', the book published by Harriet and Atkinson in 1851. Barrett presumably compiled an index to the work for inclusion in future editions which, however, never appeared.

Barrett's address was Langley House, Grove Lane, Camberwell.

The primary interest of these letters is that they illustrate the variety of Harriet's mesmeric involvements, and suggest how seriously she and others regarded the phenomenon.

However, not all of Harriet's mesmeric involvements sound as serious and as worthwhile as some of these. In volume 8 of The Zoist, (Mar. 1850 - Jan. 1851), there appeared her account of how she mesmerised her cow Ailsie and cured her, (pp. 300-303). The account was submitted by Dr. Elliotson, and was followed by the publication in The Zoist of the angry reaction of Harriet's local cow-doctor to her claims of success, (pp. 333-335). Harriet reported this to Elliotson in a letter, Oct. 23rd, 1850.

Matthew Arnold may have referred to this incident in his letters. He attended a dinner given by his mother for Harriet and Charlotte Brontë, and wrote to his fiancée, Frances Wightman, on Dec. 21st, 1850: "... talked to Miss Martineau ... and, wretched man that I am, promised to go and see her cow - keeping miracles tomorrow - I, who hardly know a cow from a sheep." (26).

James Payn, visiting Harriet, wrote: "We continued our tour of her little territory, and inspected the stall-fed cows, which were themselves not unknown to fame, as having been subjected to the influence of mesmerism," (Some Lit. Recollections, p. 166).

Apart from this curious incident, R. K. Webb asserts that Harriet also mesmerised a bear, (R.K. Webb, p. 251), though he fails to indentify the source of this information and is possibly confusing the incident with Florence Nightingale's mesmerization of a bear at Oxford, (see Chapter 7).

Such instances seem trivial and ridiculous to us now. No doubt they appeared so to many of Harriet's contemporaries. But it should be remembered that people like Harriet were more than mere eccentric enthusiasts, becoming involved in Mesmerism in a genuine spirit of dedication, however, mis-guided, based on a conviction of the truth and reality beneath the outward phenomena. R.K. Webb distinguishes the dedicated, (and socially-minded, mesmerists like Harriet from the mere enthusiast swept along by fashionable crazes:

For most of the public, mesmerism was a fad, taken up for a time, played with while it was fashionable, and forgotten. But to a few people, it was a cause and a life's work. Harriet Martineau was one of these, (R.K. Webb, p. 235).

Moreover, it is probable that cows, along with other animals, could be 'hypnotised', (see Chapter 1, note 5). Equally, however, the temptation should be avoided of ascribing too much credibility to such mesmeric activities of Harriet's. The instances seem to relate less to the serious aims of the Mesmerists in the spheres of education, crime and punishment, and more to other eccentric attitudes and beliefs which Harriet held. For example, she considered that sick-beds should be placed in a North-South line along the magnetic pole. She expressed this view in a letter to Florence Nightingale on Jan. 7th, 1860, in the British Museum collection.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

- (1) If he were about thirty when he met Harriet in 1845, he was therefore born c. 1815. Mrs. Bosanquet, discussing his father's will, states that he was a minor in 1830, but had attained his majority by 1837, when a codicil was added. He was therefore born between 1810 and 1816, (T. Bosanquet, p. 245).

- (2) Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli, 1810-1850, (1852), iii, p.80, from a letter to 'C.S', (undated).

Margaret Fuller, (1810-1850), was a leader of the cultivated circles in Bostonian society, a feminist, journalist, critic, and author of Woman in the Nineteenth Century, (1845). She visited Europe in 1846, and married the Italian Marquis Angelo Ossoli. On their return to America their ship was wrecked off New York, and the body of her child was the only one recovered.

- (3) Madelaine B. Stern: The Life of Margaret Fuller, New York, (1942), p.382. Harriet referred to Margaret's disappointment in her following the 'cure', on the Ambleside visit, in the Autobiography, i, pp. 517-518.

- (4) J. Drummond and C.B. Upton; The Life and Letters of James Martineau (1902), i, p. 228.

- (5) James Payn: Some Literary Recollections, (1884), p. 107. This work is cited as Some Lit. Recollections, when referred to later.

- (6) Recollections of a Northumbrian Lady, 1815-1866, the Memoirs of Barbara Charlton, née Tasburgh, (1949), ed. L.E.O. Charlton, pp. 217-218. Barbara Charlton, (1815-1898), notable Catholic and traveller, was the wife of William Henry Charlton of Hesleyside, Northumberland.

- (7) The Brontës, Their Lives, Friendships and Correspondence, (Shakespeare Head ed.), ed. T.J. Wise, Oxford, (1932), iii, p. 193. Letter to James Taylor, Jan. 1st, 1851.

- (8) Susanna and Catharine Winkworth: Memorials of Two Sisters, ed. by their niece, Margaret J. Shaen, (1908), pp. 17-18.

The Winkworth sisters, Susanna, (1820-1884), Emily, (1822-1887), Selina, (1825-1885), and Catharine, (1827-1878), were the daughters of an evangelical clergyman. Catharine, a religious writer, and Susanna, authoress and philanthropist, knew the Martineaus, having been educated by James Martineau in Liverpool, as well as by William Gaskell, (1805-1884), Mrs. Gaskell's husband. Both James and William Gaskell were Unitarian ministers.

- (9) The Rev. George Sandby: Mesmerism and its Opponents, (1848), pp. 125-126.

- (10) The Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend: Mesmerism Proved True, (1854), p. 64.

Basil Montagu, a friend of both Harriet and Atkinson, wrote or edited the following Baconian works: The Works of Francis Bacon, ^{16 vols, (1825-34)} (1825); Bacon's Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, ed. B. Montagu (1838 and 1851); The Essays ... and Wisdom of the Ancients, ed. B. Montagu, (1836 and 1845); Bacon's Essays, Preface by B. Montagu, (1891); The History, Natural and Experimental, of Life and Death, trans. B. Montagu; A Critique of Bacon's Novum Organum, by B. Montagu, (1821).

When Atkinson wrote: "I wonder whether Macaulay was aware ... when, in his essay on Bacon's philosophy, he said that Induction might lead to the belief in Mesmerism ..," (Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, 1851, p. 52), he was quoting Macaulay's review of Basil Montagu's sixteen volume edition of Bacon's Works, (1825-1834), in which Macaulay said of the inductive process:

Some are led by it to truth, and some to error. It led Franklin to discover the nature of lightning. It led thousands, who had less brains than Franklin, to believe in animal magnetism. But this was not because Franklin went through the process described by Bacon, and the dupes of Mesmer through a different process, The Works of Lord Macaulay, ed. by his sister, Lady Trevelyan, (1866), vi, p. 230, dated July 1837.

Finally, the Rev. George Sandby quoted Bacon in Mesmerism and its opponents, (1848), p. 132.

- (11) Lord Morpeth was George William Frederick Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, (1802-1864), eldest son of George Hoard, 6th Earl of Carlisle. He assumed the courtesy title of 'Lord Morpeth' on his grandfather's death in 1825 when his father became the 6th Earl. Whig member for Morpeth, (1826), later for Yorkshire, he became Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1835, and Lord Lieutenant in 1855, succeeding to the earldom in 1848.

He was a great friend of Harriet's, and had visited her in the Tynemouth sick-room, (R.K. Webb, p. 195). Lord Morpeth was a convinced believer in Mesmerism, and his attendance at Harriet's sessions will be discussed later. Harriet wrote of him: "he has his weaknesses, which are evident enough," but she praised his humanity, magnanimity, benevolence, affectionate temper, pure integrity, and devout conscientiousness, (Autobiography, i, p. 272).

- (12) Anna Jameson: Letters and Friendships, 1812-1860, ed. Mrs. S. Erskine, (1915), p. 216.
- (13) Louis Cazamian: The Social Novel in England, 1830-1850, (1904), trans. Martin Fido, (1973), p. 52.
- (14) H.G. Atkinson and Harriet Martineau: Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), pp. 61 and 81.
This work will in future be referred to as Letters on the Laws etc.
- (15) Robert Lee Wolff; Strange Stories and other Explorations in Victorian Fiction, Boston, (1971), p. 123.
- (16) Victoria Glendinning: 'Tales of 19th Century Neurosis', Times Literary Supplement, no. 3813, April 4th, 1975, p. 352.
- (17) Edward Rea: A Study of Harriet Martineau, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, (1969), pp. 8 and 19. This work will in future be cited as 'E. Rea.'

- (18) The Empress Alexandra of Russia, (1872-1918), consort of Tsar Nicholas II, (1868-1918), fell under the sinister influence of the mysterious monk, Rasputin, (c. 1871-1916), who was the only person able to assist her haemophilic son, the Tsarevich Alexis, (1904-1918). Through this relationship with the Empress, Rasputin was able to influence state affairs. The important factor, however, is that the Empress' subjection depended entirely upon Rasputin's ability to cure her child. Robert K. Massie, discussing the respect which the Tsar had for Rasputin, says:

To Alexandra, Rasputin became much more important. Gradually Alexandra became convinced that the starets was a personal emissary from God to her, to her husband, and to Russia ... as an irrefutable proof of his divine mission, Rasputin was able to help her son, Nicholas and Alexandra, (1968), p. 189.

- Attempting to account for Rasputin's powers in terms of suggestive hypnosis, Massie continues: "The common belief, never verified, is that Rasputin used his extraordinary eyes to hypnotise the Tsarevich and then, with the boy in a hypnotic state, suggested that the bleeding would stop," (p. 190). Massie concludes, however: "If it is possible that Rasputin could have controlled Alexis's bleeding by using hypnosis, it is far from historically certain that he did", (ibid.).
- (19) Little Nell of The Old Curiosity Shop, serialised in Master Humphry's Clock, (1840-1841), and published in book form, (1841). Little Nell would therefore have been well known by the time of these sessions in 1845.
- (20) The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon, (1897), i, p. 236.
- (21) The Life of Mary Russell Mitford, related in a series of her Letters to her friends, ed. the Rev. A. G. L'Estrange, (1870), iii, pp. 192-193.

Charlotte Elizabeth (Tonna), and her Mesmerism: A Letter to Miss Martineau, (1845), were discussed in Chapter 3.

- (22) Psychological investigators also seem to be aware of this concept. F.W.H. Myers discussed the subliminal and supraliminal minds, (i.e. the sub-conscious and conscious), in Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death, (1902), Chapter 1 of the 1919 edition.
- (23) G. Chisholm: The Times Gazetteer of the World, (1899), p. 342.
- (24) Adeline Sergeant: Women Novelists of Queen Victoria's Reign, (1879), p. 149. This work is later cited as 'Sergeant'.

William Bell Scott asserted the closeness of the relationship between the Browns and Crowes, referring to Dr. Samuel Brown, "and his most assiduous friend Mrs. Crowe, whose cares for him were almost as great as those of his devoted wife," Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott, 1830-1882, ed. W. Minto, (1892), i, p. 2.

- (25) Edith Sitwell: English Eccentrics, (1933), Penguin edtn. (1973) p. 309.
- (26) Letters of Matthew Arnold, 1848-1888, ed. George W. E. Russell, (1895) i, p. 13.

One hesitates to regard the comment as a definite reference to the mesmerizing of the cow, since Russell's explanatory footnote to the letter states that the miracles were "some experiments on a farm of two acres".

CHAPTER FIVE : HENRY GEORGE ATKINSON, HIS INFLUENCE UPON HARRIET
MARTINEAU, II.

When Harriet planned a tour of Egypt and Palestine in 1847 with her Liverpool friends the Yates, and J.E. Ewart, later a Liverpool M.P., (Autobiography, i, pp. 531-532), Atkinson was included in the party, (Autobiography, i, pp. 532-533). However, he was unable to undertake the tour and only accompanied the party across the Channel to Boulogne.

Atkinson was gradually superseding James Martineau as Harriet's chief confidant, adviser and friend. J. C. Nevill says that Atkinson had "supplanted her brother James as the comptroller of her public conscience," (J.C. Nevill, p. 92).

When Harriet returned from her tour, and prepared to write an account of it in what became Eastern Life, (1848), she ^{realised} ~~realised~~ that certain of her views on non-Christian religions and the mythology of 'true' Biblical stories, were unorthodox and possibly blasphemous. For advice it was now to Atkinson, the free-thinker, that she turned, and not to James, the Unitarian minister, enquiring as to how far and how strongly she should express her dissensions from conservative theology. She and Atkinson discussed these issues at length in a series of letters, (Autobiography, i, pp. 539-549).

Harriet's confidences to Atkinson went further than this. Mrs. Miller quotes a letter that Atkinson wrote to her after Harriet's death, revealing that Harriet even asked him about such an intimate matter as whether or not to include the John Hugh Worthington engagement story in the Autobiography (F.F. Miller, p. 33). It was this sort of reliance upon Atkinson that contributed to the break with James, provoking his vicious and resentful attack in his later review of their collaborative Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, which will be discussed shortly.

Harriet's own religious faith was rapidly declining; R.K. Webb, says:

In 1844 her belief in immortality - she had never believed in bodily resurrection - was still firm. She believed in a future life, she wrote to Bulwer Lytton, because under a benignant Providence, any aspiration so natural as to be nearly universal

must be true. She believed in the reunions of those whose love was truly great, who had found that intense and pure intellectual sympathy which could survive any change or development of separated persons on earth or in the hereafter. On such a question one had to abandon reason as a guide and reject it as a barrier, relying on the 'life of the heart' and the affections, (R.K. Webb, p. 285).

Within three years, Harriet had abandoned these ideas, and belief in God the Father, the argument from design, and any concept whatever of life after Death. Eastern Life indicated the demolition of Harriet's religion. In the work she relegated Christianity to the level of any other religious creed, saying that it relied upon myths borrowed from ancient religions. She said of ancient Egyptian religion: "... this early theology originated later systems of belief and adoration", (1) and of the Creation story: "In this particular case, we have adopted their traditions given to us through the mind of Moses", (i, p.206).

She attributed the cures and oracles of Egyptian religion to Mesmerism, basing her assertion on the 'facts' of Mesmerism: "Finding, as we do, indisputable proofs that at present the human being is capable ... of knowing events which are happening afar, and of fore-knowing events which are future", (i, p.314), and she described miraculous cures in mesmeric terms as, "touching with hands", and healing by, "stroking with gentle hands", (i, p. 315).

The Eden serpent was to her no more than a Judaic borrowing from the Egyptians, as was the Hebrews' tabernacle: "The serpent in Eden is, in the history, a mere serpent, altogether Egyptian in its conception", and, "the tabernacle of the Hebrews was as like as it could be made to an Egyptian temple," (ii, pp. 277, 286).

In Palestine she mocked the sacred places, saying of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: "What a puppet-show is this place compared with temples where I had seen the sculptured Osiris," (iii, pp. 162-163); she doubted the site of Golgotha, (iii, pp. 163-164), mocked the idea of the stocks where Jesus' feet were placed, (iii, p. 165), and scorned the

Holy Family's house at Nazareth as "childish superstition", (iii, p. 221). The Annunciation was dismissed as a "mythic story" no different from the miraculous births of "old Egyptian and Hindoo allegory," with the exception that Christianity tried to assert that they are not allegories but "historical fact", (iii, pp. 222-223). Finally, she anticipated her later belligerence towards Christianity, saying: "Christianity has done so little to raise and purify the nations in eighteen centuries", when "mythological fable is permitted to encrust it", (iii, p. 224).

Eastern Life was not warmly received. Although the early part of the work seemed to be no more than an attempt to view Christianity and Judaism against their ancient cultural background, and although the criticisms of some of the absurdities of the sacred places and the exploitation of visitors by those who maintained the places were valid, the work had proceeded to open mockery of certain Christian doctrines, and to denunciation of the entire historical impact of Christianity. Many criticised the work. For example, Jane Arnold wrote to her brother Tom:

Presently, we are going to meet Miss Martineau ...; she has just finished her book on Egypt, which is to be out by Easter; we have heard most of it in evening readings, and with very little pleasure. I should not half so much complain of her way of treating the Old Testament, but all that part which belongs to the New Testament, to her travels in the Holy Land, is miserable".(2).

Harriet had gradually come to share all the beliefs of Henry George Atkinson, his Mesmerism, his phrenology, and his atheism. J.C. Nevill describes her subservience as resulting in "her absolute and positive acceptance of his atheistical-mesmericum-phrenological creed..." (J. C. Nevill, p. 95).

Atkinson certainly had a tremendous influence upon Harriet, particularly regarding her atheism. She constantly denied any influence, however. In her Autobiography she made statements that her philosophical views were her own, that it was untrue that Atkinson was her mesmerist

and, "infused into me his own views by the power he thus gained over my brain," (i, p. 489).

She also denied any influence of Atkinson's on her thinking as revealed in Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851). She said that, following the publication of that work, "In print, Mr. Atkinson was reproached ... with drawing me into the business, and making me his 'victim' ...," whereas in fact, she asserted, they had always shared similar ideas: "... he had lectured, and published ... the same views both physiological and anti-theological, before we had any acquaintance whatever", (Autobiography, ii, p. 48).

She asserted too, speaking of the sick-room period, (1839-1844): "A large portion of the transition from religious inconsistency and irrationality to free-thinking strength and liberty was gone over during that period," (Autobiography, i, p. 466).

Of the originality of her heretical beliefs in Eastern Life, she said: "I have said thus much, partly to show how I came by the views which I have been absurdly supposed to derive, in some necromantic way, from Mr. Atkinson," (Autobiography, i, p. 539).

Again, she opened Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development with a defensive Preface, saying: "For some years I had been taking a stronger and stronger interest in Mr. Atkinson's views on a group of subjects which I had been contemplating from my youth up." (3).

However, whether she had been contemplating his views from her youth up or not, she never expressed them until she met him and came under his influence in 1845. She was not an atheist in 1835, when Margaret Fuller wrote of her, thanking God, "for the purifying, elevating communion that I have enjoyed with this beloved and revered being," adding: "May her noble mind be kept firmly poised in its native truth, unsullied by prejudice or error ... May each day bring to this generous seeker new riches

of true philosophy and of Divine Love."(4).

Throughout the sick-room period Harriet derived comfort not from a doctrine of atheistic stoicism, but from Ary Scheffer's picture of Christ as healer and deliverer, 'Christus Consolator'.(5). Even as late as 1842, she was able to say to Mrs. Jameson: "God is the most sympathetic of all beings; what but the intensity and far-sightedness and universality of his sympathy could have induced him to create us?"(6).

After this she met Atkinson, and it was then that Harriet plunged into atheism. It is therefore doubtful that his influence on her was as minimal as she maintained. As Mrs. Bosanquet says of their relationship following the first encounter:

After a few more conversations she was ready to emerge from the stifling air of Christian theology into the purer gas provided by the new prophet. She easily transferred her adoration from an invisible God to the more satisfying image of perfect gentlemanliness provided by her young friend. Throughout her later life Atkinson's bust decorated her study and inspired her labours, (T. Bosanquet, pp. 156-157).

The actress Frances Anne ('Fanny') Kemble definitely blamed Atkinson for Harriet's 'atheistic descent'. She wrote to 'H' on May 19th, 1874, referring to Harriet:

.. it is now many years since I have had any direct communication with her, and indeed do not suppose we could have had any that would have been very satisfactory to me, after her conversion from Christianity to Atkinsonism, which caused me a whole day's bitter crying by the seaside at St. Leonards, for her sake, and that of all those who had believed in her, and still believe in God.(7).

Fanny Kemble wrote to another Harriet, on July 19th, 1876, having heard of Harriet Martineau's death:

I think her change of opinions towards the end of her life almost the strangest that I ever heard of, and her curious deference to that Mr. Atkinson, under whose influence, I think, she professed to have become a complete disbeliever, even in the existence of God ... To be sure, Shakespeare says, 'God is a good man'; but Mr. Atkinson, for as good as he may have been, seems to me a poor succedaneum for Harriet Martineau's earlier objects of veneration, (Further Records, i, pp. 313-314).

Moreover, it is clear that Atkinson himself was far from consistent regarding religion. He wrote to Harriet on Good Friday, 1851:

We want rousing from a lethargy, that we may listen to the God of heaven and of earth who speaks to us in our hearts. The word of God is in every man, if he will listen. God is with us in all Nature, if we will but read the written law; God is in the clouds, and we hear him in the wind... The man whom they crucified on this day gave a Sermon on a mount. It is in every house, in every head; it is known, passage after passage; but in how few has it touched the heart, and opened the understanding? (Autobiography, ii, p. 55).

In view of Atkinson's irreconcilable self-contradiction, it is amazing how Harriet could ever have humbled herself before his opinion. She wrote: "I had, for half my life, been astray among the metaphysicians .. I at first took Mr. Atkinson's disregard of them and their methods for ignorance ... I have much to blush for in this matter, and in worse," (Autobiography, i, p. 491).

She told him what her 'metaphysicians' said. Atkinson thanked her, "leaving me to find out in time how he knew through and through the very matters which the metaphysicians had barely sketched the outside of," (Autobiography, i, pp. 491-492).

Harriet may well have begun to contemplate atheism, but it is obvious that, despite her denials, Atkinson influenced these thoughts, their development, and their conclusions.

Not content with sharing Atkinson's beliefs, Harriet proceeded to publish them. Atkinson was still a nonentity outside his circle of mesmerists, (V. Wheatley, p. 261), and Harriet aimed to propagate his philosophy through a book of collaborative letters establishing Atkinson's reputation as instructor, with Harriet as querent or pupil.

In 1851 their joint Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development appeared. The work was a disaster. Mrs. Miller blames its failure on its question/answer form, (F.F. Miller, pp. 157-158), and R.K. Webb

dismisses it as "fourth or fifth rate philosophizing", (R. H. Webb, p. 21).

Any structural unity which the work gained through its question/answer form did little to clarify the discussion and argument, which remained obscure, vague and, at times, pretentiously abstract.

The letters were preceded by seventeen "mottoes" from writers including Bacon, Mill, Humboldt, Gall and Montaigne. Following these, Harriet opened the debate, (Letter 1), enquiring of Atkinson what basis he would use for an investigation into Man's Nature and Development: "I want you to tell me... how you would have one set about the study of the powers of Man, in order to understand his nature, and his place, business and pleasure in the universe," (Letters on the Laws, etc., pp. 1-2). Replying, Atkinson rejected the 'web' of spiritual speculation, advocating the need to investigate the material world, in the tradition of Bacon, (p.5), whose aim he described as, "not to invent buffooneries and fables about worlds, but to inspect, and, as it were, dissect the nature of this world," (pp. 6-7). Atkinson too, therefore, rejected the speculations of theology and spirituality as "all idols and superstitions," (p. 8), since for him, only following Bacon could, "lead to any discovery and practical results," (p. 9).

Replying, (Letter 3), Harriet praised his rejection of theological reasoning: "I doubt whether I have ever met with any one but yourself who was perfectly free from such learning," (p. 11).

Rejecting the world of dreams as a key to their investigation; (p. 14), she asked if Atkinson intended resorting to brain-analysis to determine the source of human powers; if so, how would ^{he} proceed? (p. 15).

Atkinson's argument, (Letter 4), was that the "Mind is the product of the brain," (p. 17). He called Mental Philosophy "the physiology of the brain, as Gall termed it. Spurzheim, (8), called it Phrenology," (p. 16).

However, Atkinson saw limitations in basic phrenology as the means of discussing the different faculties of the mind and their derivation

from the material brain: "I felt ... the unsatisfactory and imperfect condition of the science," (p. 23). He discussed the new enlightenment he had been able to obtain on the subject through the use of Mesmerism, (Letter 6). He declared that, in mesmeric trance, subjects were able to give detailed analyses of their own brains, and the division of the brain into 'phrenological' areas or sections that phrenologists had had to acquire laboriously: "But we find in Mesmerism ... renewed light and hope, and another means of investigation ... I observed that under the influence of Mesmerism some patients would spontaneously place their hand ... on the part of the brain in action," (p.34).

Specifying the case of a fifty year old patient of his who could give such a performance, (Letter 8), he said:

I could excite any part of her head, and under any combination: as I found that she could recognize the size and character of each organ when in action. She could explain the nature of each faculty, and its precise situation, and relation to other parts ... She could see the form and structure of the brain, (p. 55).

Moreover, this remarkable woman was, he claimed, simultaneously able to tell him what she saw.

Atkinson was therefore able to catalogue the various phrenological areas, (pp. 74-81), such as Hearing, Comparison, Joy and Self-esteem; among his lengthy catalogue were the areas of Secretive power, Food Faculty, Love of Industry and Labour and, the most important, the "Eye of the Mind", the Intuitive or Clairvoyant Faculty, (p. 76).

Atkinson crowned his account of the woman able to see into her own head, with another describing a lady of forty who, though blind from birth, was able to see in her sleep, (Letter 12). This was because the relevant area of her brain functioned, although her eyes did not, (pp. 103-105). Also clairvoyant, she "frequently in her sleep perceives what is going on in distant places; and she also foresees events," (p. 105).

He said that he too experienced visions of the dead and

heard voices, (p. 142). He had another "mesmeric patient, who went into six distinct states of memory and consciousness; and she recognised me afresh, and in a different manner, in each," (p. 144).

It was here, (Letter 14), that the atheistic Atkinson made his misleading reference to 'God': "Knowledge establishes the true relations of things in a whole, and has only one God ... God is the substance of Law, and origin of all things," (p. 141).

Harriet was swift to seize upon the self-contradiction: "And when you speak of God as the origin of all things, what is it that you mean?" (p. 164).

Stumbling, Atkinson replied: "We assume a something and principle, because the form of mind requires it, as a thing essential, though unknown; and it is this which I wrongly enough perhaps termed God," (p. 170).

He embarked on a vigorous attack on religion, denouncing the doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement, (pp. 171-172), and accusing theologians of social ineffectiveness: "It is very certain that theologians have failed to reform the world", (p. 172). He asserted his atheism: "Philosophy finds no God in nature ... nor has a God revealed himself miraculously," (p. 173). He assailed the supernatural side of Christianity:

Prophecy, clairvoyance, healing by touch, visions, dreams, revelations, and the delusion of believing themselves divinely inspired, are now known to be simple matters in nature, which may be induced at will, and experimented upon at our firesides, here in London... as well as in the 'holy land', (p. 175).

He attacked the 'Christian Mesmerism' of people like the Rev. George Sandby, (9), and dismissed the desire for life-after-death as, "merely a pampered habit of mind, founded upon the instinct of preservation," (p. 185). He attacked Religion as "a confused notion of unintelligible dogmas," (p. 203), rejecting the doctrines of the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Atonement, (p. 204). Christ's miracles were attributed to Mesmerism, (p. 211), and the Resurrection was dismissed: "there are thousands of ghost stories of a similar character," (p. 215).

Atkinson condemned the universities, specifying, "the unsatisfactory nature of the education afforded at our colleges," which were, in his view, entangled in dogmas and religion, (p. 207).

Harriet joined in his assault on Religion, (Letter 19), asserting: "There is no theory of a God ... which is not utterly repugnant to my faculties," (p. 217). Godlessness was freedom, (p. 219), and she went further than Atkinson to assert that Christ's miracles were not even mesmeric, but fiction: "If I could admit the narratives of Jesus and his miracles to be historically true, I should adopt your view of the powers by which he wrought them," (p. 221). However: "The tales are mainly legendary, and a perpetration of the ideas, and repetition of the narratives, of old Jewish traditions," (ibid.).

Atkinson, as if trying to 'out-do' Harriet in virulent atheism, launched into an attack on the narrowness of Religion, (p. 223), the failure of Christians to live up to their ideals, (p. 224), the depraved view of God in Religion, (p. 227). Newman was denounced, (pp. 227-228), then the inadequacy of Christian morality: "Christian morals ... will require much weeding and developing before they can be accepted by high and philosophic minds," (p. 230). He lashed out at the bishops, (p. 231), doctrinal squabbling, (p. 232), and asserted the essential amorality of Man: "Man is neither selfish nor unselfish - neither good nor evil - worthy nor unworthy; but simply nature," (p. 232).

To him the Bible was a collection of folk-lore and fairy-tales, (p. 233-234), including the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, (p. 235), Creation, Eden, the Tree of Knowledge, (p. 239), and he concluded: "The Christian religion is, in fact ... no better than an old wife's fable," (p. 239).

He deplored social hypocrisies in a Christian state: "How men can repeat the Lord's Prayer, and hang a man in the same breath, is astonishing, and exhibits the utter depravity of a Christian legislation," (p. 244).

This exposure of genuine adulteration of Christian ideals was perhaps the only redeeming feature of an otherwise vicious piece of anti-Christian literature riddled with generalisation and coloured by sheer prejudice.

Harriet echoed Atkinson's views in Letter 21 (10), and he ended the correspondence with a letter (no. 24), beginning with the words: "It seems to me there are three principal fundamental forms of the moral life; namely - active humanity, industry in acquiring knowledge, and honesty in imparting what we know," (p. 286).

There followed ninety-seven pages of appendices, quotations from various writers designed to illuminate points raised in the text.

The Letters produced immediate controversy. Both Christians and scientists attacked them. George Eliot, who reviewed the work, (The Leader, March 1st and 8th, 1851), "thought the work showed admirable boldness even to the point of being studiously offensive." (11). She rejected the mesmeric content, but, unlike some of her relationships, Harriet's friendship with George Eliot was not damaged by the work. (12)

James Payn wrote of the work that he had read many of Harriet's books, "including a later one which was just then making no little noise in the world, to the great detriment of her reputation among the orthodox," (13) and he continued that, in this work, "she had fluttered the doves in the conventional cote by the publication of 'the Atkinson letters' very considerably, and I found myself looked upon with some disfavour as her constant visitor," (p. 113).

Payn was amused by a newspaper correspondence which had decided that it would now be an impropriety for Harriet to be buried in a churchyard. When he met her, she informed him that she had suggested a near-by quarry for a resting-place, but Atkinson had said she would spoil it, (p. 113).

Mary Russell Mitford wrote to Charles Boner on April 17th, 1851, in a very puzzled frame of mind: "I have been looking at a curious

volume by Miss Martineau and a Mr. Atkinson."(14). Referring to the preface of mottoes, she continued:

She has taken one from her and my friend Archbishop Whately,(15), which, considering that the book is called atheistical, will hardly enchant his grace. For my part I should never have called it by so hard a name. I should rather have doubted whether either the lady or gentleman quite knows the exact thing that the letters do mean. I am sure I do not, and I suspect that many other of their readers will be in the same predicament, (ibid.).

She wrote again to Charles Boner on Sept. 19th, 1853, saying of James Payn: "he has been to Scotland and the lakes this year, where Harriet Martineau talked over the book with him, exculpating Mrs. Atkinson," (p. 260).

(N.B. Since the latter is obviously a reference to Atkinson, I suggest either that Miss Mitford made a mistake in writing 'Mrs' Atkinson, or that Elizabeth Lee made a careless transcription).

Macready, returning from a dinner-party given by Dickens for himself, Forster, Sir Edwin Landseer, (1802-1873), the artist, and Mr. Howe, Speaker of the Nova Scotia Parliament as guests, wrote in his diary on Feb. 2nd, 1851: "Heard of Miss Martineau's book - alas! alas! as they at table reported it, a direct and positive declaration and avowal of atheistical opinions."(16).

Mary Howitt was appalled by the Letters, and wrote: "We have read Miss Martineau's book. It is to my mind the most awful book that was ever written by a woman. It made me sick and ill to hear them talk of Jesus as a mere clever mesmerist."(17).

The Winkworth sisters were similarly shocked. Selina wrote to Susanna on Feb. 17th, 1851:

The Froudes have just been reading Miss Martineau's new book, called 'Man's Nature and Development', and consisting of a correspondence between herself and Mr. Atkinson, the mesmerist (whom she used to call at Ambleside - do you remember? - her dear Atheist philosopher). It takes a thoroughly materialistic view of

the nature of man; and, at the end, Miss Martineau expresses a strong sense of relief and freedom at escaping from belief in God and a future life. What will her brother say?

Mr. Froude was so shocked that he straightway sat down and wrote what was first intended to be a review, but afterwards (so Mrs. Froude told me, for I did not read it) grew into a defence of Christianity; so he took out the part of it referring to Miss M, and sent the rest to The Leader, signed F. He does not think there is power enough in the book to produce much effect; but I should fear her name would give it full effect, especially among the lower classes, who would not be shocked either at the flippancy of the style. Mr. Froude says he thinks that for the next fifty years we shall have many such books, - that ...it reminds him of the state of the world before the coming of Christ. If so, I wish I had lived at some other time.(18).

Although Matthew Arnold said that he did not read the work, he suspected that it would not have pleased him. He wrote to Mrs. Forster on May 7th, 1855:

I have never seen so much as the outside ... either of the physiological or philosophical treatises of Harriet Martineau - but I think her character a fine one, and her independence and efforts to be sincere with herself worthy of admiration. I am glad of an opportunity of expressing my admiration at this time, when she has much to suffer - the more so as reputations like those to which she had given herself are so utterly antipathetic to me that I never could return her friendship to myself by even a decent amount of interest and sympathy for her labours.(19).

Charlotte Brontë found the Letters distressing. Although, as was stated in Chapter 3, neither Mesmerism nor atheism finally divided Harriet and Charlotte, but their contrasting views on human love, and Harriet's stunning review of Villette, Charlotte nevertheless revealed in a letter of Feb. 11th, 1851, that the work had disturbed her:

Have you read Miss Martineau's and Mr. Atkinson's new work, Letters on the Nature and Development of Man? If you have not, it would be worth your while to do so.

Of the impression this book has made on me, I will not now say much. It is the first exposition of avowed atheism and materialism I have ever read; the first unequivocal declaration of disbelief in the existence of a God or a future life I have ever seen. In judging of such exposition and declaration, one would wish entirely to put aside the sort of instinctive horror they awaken, and to consider them in an impartial spirit and collected mood. This I find it difficult to do. The strangest thing is, that we are all called on to rejoice over this hopeless blank - to receive this bitter bereavement as great

gain - to welcome this unutterable desolation as a state of pleasant freedom. Who could do this if he would? Who would do it if he could?

Sincerely, for my own part, do I wish to find and know the Truth; but if this be Truth, well may she guard herself with mysteries, and cover herself with a veil. If this be Truth, man or woman who beholds her can but curse the day he or she was born.(20).

Nevertheless, Mrs. Gaskell wrote, Charlotte, "could not bear the contemptuous tone in which this work was spoken of by many critics; it made her more indignant than almost any other circumstance during my acquaintance with her," (Life, p. 330). (20a).

Harriet herself claimed of Charlotte Brontë: "She was very far indeed from sympathising in our doctrine; and she emphatically said so; but this did not prevent her doing justice to us," (Autobiography, ii, pp. 41-42).

Apart from positive criticism and reservations regarding the Letters following their publication one can detect a significant cooling of the affection with which many had previously regarded Harriet Martineau.(21).

Censured by friends, therefore, Harriet was also violently criticised in print. The most hurtful attacks, from her view-point, were reviews by James Martineau, J.S. Bushnan, and The Zoist.

James Martineau naturally felt jealous of Atkinson. Mrs. Wheatley says: "when all is told, it does seem probable that a subconscious jealousy on James' part was at the root of the matter. Atkinson had usurped his place in Harriet's life as teacher and mentor", (V. Wheatley, p. 311).

In earlier days, Harriet and James had been close. James' biographers, referring to the period c. 1821, speak of, "the strong attachment between the brother and sister"(22)

James was alienated by Harriet's Mesmerism, her demand for the destruction of her correspondence, and now, in the Letters, by her rejection of beliefs which had once united them. James wrote: "to

my amazement, her convictions had yielded to the most incompetent arguments without any apparent resistance..., and, in proportion to my estimate of her characteristic vigour of understanding, was this exceptional submission to an inferior mortifying to me" (Life etc. of J. Martineau, i, p. 223).

James' review of the Letters appeared in a Unitarian quarterly of which he was a co-editor, The Prospective Review, June 1851, 'Mesmeric Atheism', Vol. 7, pp. 224-262. James had thoroughly researched the background of his subject, especially Atkinson's ideas, reputation, and publications.(23).

In his review, James ridiculed Mesmerism and attacked Atkinson's scientific conjectures and theological pretensions, even assailing his punctuation and grammar. More important, he deplored Harriet's subjection to such an intellect as Atkinson's.

If the review were designed to alienate Harriet from Atkinson, it had the opposite effect. The review marked the final rift with James. James' wife, Helen Martineau, wrote in 1853 to Mr. Lewis, her future son-in-law, that Harriet, "does not forgive her brother's review of Mr. Atkinson's horrible book ... she uses hard names, and talks against him, and has never exchanged a word with us since," (Life etc. of J. Martineau, i, p.226).

It was not, however, till the summer of 1854 "that Miss Martineau herself declared a reconciliation to be quite out of the question," (ibid.).

However Harriet regarded James' intentions in his review, he himself declared that his actions towards her, including the review, "occasioned alienation on her side; they expressed none whatever on mine" (Life etc. of J. Martineau, ii, p. 68).

James' review pleased Professor Francis Newman, (1805-1897), brother of Cardinal Newman, who wrote to James in May 1851: "You have performed a painful but wholesome duty in your review of Atkinson and Martineau. To me it is a satisfaction to find you so pointedly avow that there is

no logical coherence in their book," (Life etc. of J. Martineau, ii, p.319).

James' attack on the Letters aimed to undermine Atkinson's theological and philosophical speculations: J.S. Bushnan's assault, Miss Martineau and her Master, (24), aimed to expose the medical and scientific fallacies of the work.

The strength of Bushnan's satirical attack lay in its apparent insistence on treating the collaborators' discussions seriously:

The eternal 'Laws of Matter' have at length raised up two individuals to rectify all the confusions of the moral world. The concurrence of atoms so uniformly abortive to that end ... had, in our favoured generation, happily hit the due proportion in the brains of Miss Harriet Martineau and Mr. Henry George Atkinson, (p.1), and,

By law, H.G. Atkinson and Harriet Martineau came forth from the womb of Time, striking examples of the high career which some stray particles of the matter of the universe are made to run, under slight modifications of its own eternal and inscrutable laws, (p.3).

Bushnan aimed primarily to attack Atkinson and not Harriet as the exponent of the absurd and pretentious theories in the Letters, but he also exposed Harriet's folly in her subjection to Atkinson: "Alas! Miss Martineau deserves our pity; but being found ... in bad company, she cannot escape altogether unharmed. It is to be hoped she may still be reclaimed. As for Mr. Atkinson, we despair of him." (p.5), and: "Mr. Atkinson is her evil genius; he has suggested to her bewildered brain certain crude and distorted ideas on subjects of the very last importance," (p.11).

Bushnan mercilessly ridiculed Atkinson: "It is not with Lord Bacon, but with Mr. Atkinson that we have to deal," (p.20); "Mr. Atkinson banishes power from the universe," (p.52).

Bushnan took each of Atkinson's theories, demolishing them in turn and constantly indicating Atkinson's specific fallacies: "Mr. Atkinson has nowhere explained the exact sense in which he understands the word cause," (p.36); "Mr. Atkinson appears to misunderstand the axiom 'that every event must have a cause'," (p. 49); "Mr. Atkinson may be represented

as guilty of a solecism... when he piques himself on the discovery that there is no such thing as chance," (p. 75); "Mr. Atkinson troubles himself very little with proofs" (p. 83).

Bushnan vehemently assailed Mesmerism and phrenology, (pp. 116-138), ridiculing the idea of people in mesmeric trance touching whichever 'organ' in their brains is operating, (p. 122), and both phrenology and Mesmerism were dismissed as "pseudo-sciences", (p. 129). It was from this nonsense that he hoped to awaken Harriet: "We say to Miss Martineau, let her examine her own breast in a natural manner, at some moment when she feels unbiased by the affectation of this pseudo-philosophy," (p. 51).

Bushnan accounted simply for the claims made for mesmeric phenomena: "In so far as the effects produced by mesmerism on some persons of susceptible constitution are real, they are of a morbid character, and closely allied to the phenomena of well-known diseases".(p.135)

He was contemptuous of Atkinson's personal, pretentious claims: "With phreno-mesmerism, of which ... Mr. Atkinson claims to be the discoverer, we lose all patience."(p.137).

Again, of clairvoyance, he observed: "If there be any such supernatural things in the mind of man ... Mr. Atkinson grossly deceives himself if he thinks they can be accounted for ... by a mere reference to the established laws of Nature." (p. 146).

He totally dismissed Atkinson's entire 'philosophy': "Mr. Atkinson's system rests on the assumption that matter is eternal - an assumption wholly gratuitous." (p. 162).

His conclusion defied the torrent of Atkinson's and Harriet's atheism, asserting simply: "there is a God". (p. 173).

The condemnation of the Letters by The Zoist, however, was a heavier blow to the collaborators, epitomising their rejection by the official body of English mesmerists. The Zoist had once upheld Harriet's

cure, even her cow-doctoring activities. Now, however, it published three bold dismissive condemnations of the Letters. The first, (Vol. 9, Mar. 1851 - Jan. 1852, pp. 65-69), was a satiric 'send-up' of the work; the second, (Vol. 9, p. 224), made no attempt to spare Harriet: "their book is a very impudent production. - The amount of ignorance displayed by Miss Martineau ... is really something marvellous," (p.224).

The third condemnation, (Vol. 9, p. 421), mocked specifically at Atkinson's lady who was able to see into her own head: "Mr. Atkinson's discoveries have been confirmed by no one: and as to the clairvoyant lady who made the revelation of these discoveries ... we regarded her sayings as mere wandering," (p. 421).

Such contempt was the general fate suffered by the Letters in periodical-reviews. For example, The Gentleman's Magazine, commented: "A more shallow and presumptuous book we have never perused ... its dullness is about equal to its impudence ... It is only to the half-educated that the words of Miss Martineau and Mr. Atkinson can prove seductive." (25).

The Letters are naturally regarded as a calamity in Harriet's career by biographers and critics. Edward Rea dismisses them as "Atkinson's almost incoherent rodomontade," (E. Rea, p. 21). Mrs. Bosanquet underlines the main faults of the work, saying that Atkinson's interesting observations in the sphere of psychical research were undermined by his failure to realise the greater importance of trained, scientific investigation over mere abstract generalisation, and she adds of Harriet: "she insisted on his providing theories about how the dying can affect people at a distance when he wanted to do no more than tell ghost stories," (T. Bosanquet, pp. 181-182).

Harriet took some comfort from the few favourable comments which the work received. Professor Gregory informed her: "no work has ever

yet borne your name fit to be compared with 'The Letters' in its ultimate effect for good on the human race," ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 420).

Harriet's own comment on the stormy affair of the Letters was perhaps more stoical than smug: "we found ourselves no worse for the venture we had made, and well satisfied that we had borne our testimony to the truth," (Autobiography, ii, p. 40).

Harriet had become aware of the writings of Comte, and saw a resemblance in them to her and Atkinson's views.

The eccentricities of the phrenologists and mesmerists were not incompatible, strangely enough, with the practical, social ideas of the Comteans.(26). We have noted, (Chapter 4), that when Atkinson first met Harriet, he advocated a philosophy of practical living, and rejected abstract spiritual speculation. R.K. Webb notes: "In the prospectus of the Zoist there is a marked Comtean strain," (R.K. Webb, p. 245), although he believes Harriet was "never a true Comtean," (R.K. Webb, p. 306). However, Jonathan Miller regards her as a Comtean, saying that she was "devoted ... to Comtean Positivism."(27). R. K. Webb himself does see strong connections between Harriet's views and Comte's philosophy, saying, "Both were necessarians; both were phrenologists," (R.K. Webb, p. 307).

What, therefore, is 'Comteanism'?

Auguste Comte, (1798-1857):

lived during a period when political and social conditions in France were highly unstable. In reflecting the spirit of his age, he rose against the tendency prevalent among his predecessors to propound philosophic doctrines in disregard of the facts of nature and society. His revolt was directed particularly against traditional metaphysics with its endless speculations, countless assumptions, and futile controversies. To his views he gave the name of 'positivism'.

According to him, the history of humanity should be described in terms of three stages. The first of these was the theological when people's interpretation of reality was dominated by superstitions and prejudices; the second stage was metaphysical when people attempted to comprehend, and reason about, reality,

but were unable to support their contentions by facts; and the third and final stage was positive, when dogmatic assumptions began to be replaced by factual knowledge. Accordingly, the history of thought was characterised by a certain succession of sciences, expressing the turning of scholarly interest towards the earthly and human affairs, namely: mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology and sociology.(28).

Harriet's knowledge of Comte began when she read Lewes' chapter on him in Charles Knight's Weekly Volume, and Littré's epitome, (Autobiography, 11, pp. 57, 70-76). She mentioned Comte's philosophy to Atkinson, drawing his attention to the similarities between his and Comte's views. She asked him if Comte had deeply influenced his thinking; Atkinson replied that he knew nothing of Comte beyond "Knight's volume by Lewes," (Autobiography 11, p. 53).

With mounting enthusiasm, Harriet obtained the first volume of Comte's Philosophie Positive, and immediately saw the need for an English version. Having perused the entire six volumes of the work, she saw too the need for a more accessible, summarised translation.

She secured a patron in a Mr. Lombe, a former High Sherrif of Norfolk, who had had to abandon his own plans for translating Comte through ill-health. He gave Harriet £500 to finance the project. Harriet began work; in two years she completed a clear, readable edition of Comte's system. It was published in 1853, (Autobiography, 11, p. 86), and widely hailed as a masterpiece. J.C. Nevill regards it as the most outstanding achievement of her career. (J.C. Nevill, p. 106).

Monsieur Littré, disciple and biographer of Comte, and the historian Grote, both greatly admired the work. Monsieur Avezac - Lavigne suggested *that Harriet's work should be re-translated back into French, because* it was more readable than the original. Harriet modestly replied, however, that it would be better to compress the original Comte, ('Memorials', Autobiography, 11, pp. 422-424). Her version succeeded in converting many to Comtean thought.

R.K. Webb is less enthusiastic about the work, and criticises it for the awkwardness of mechanical translation, the mark of a hastily-conceived work, (R.K. Webb, p. 304). Nevertheless, the very achievement of translating and abridging Comte's colossal work, so rapidly, deserved the recognition it received, and illustrated that Harriet's skill and prowess lay here, and not, perhaps, in the sphere of purely 'imaginative', 'creative' writing.

In later years the relationship between Harriet and Atkinson continued in its strength and intimacy. The two corresponded regularly right up until Harriet's death in 1876. Harriet demonstrated her supreme confidence in Atkinson by bequeathing him her skull and brain. She wrote:

It is my desire, from an interest in the progress of scientific investigation, that my skull should be given to Henry George Atkinson, of Upper Gloucester Place, and also my brain, if my death take place within such distance of the said Henry George Atkinson's then present abode as to enable him to have it for the purposes of scientific investigation, (J.C. Nevill, p. 112).

However, Dr. Shepherd of Ambleside who had agreed to enact the terms of this morbid legacy, died before Harriet, in 1872; determinedly she wrote to Atkinson on April 23rd, 1872:

When you heard of Mr. Shepherd's death, you must, I should think, have considered what was to be done in regard to fulfilling the provision of my will about skull and brain. It is to inform you of this that I write. Mr. Shepherd's assistant and successor is Mr. William Moore King, a young man who is considered very clever, and is certainly very kind, gentlemanly, simple in mind and manners ... I told him the whole matter of the provision in my will, and of Mr. Shepherd's engagement... Mr. King listened anxiously, made himself master of the arrangement, and distinctly engaged to do what we ask, saying that it was so completely clear between us that we need never speak of it again, (F.F. Miller, p. 209).

It so happened, however, that Atkinson was now resident outside England, and in no position to accept the bequest. A codicil was added to Harriet's will, revoking the legacy.(29). The incident indicates the continuing, extraordinarily high regard which Harriet had for Atkinson.

Indeed, she was seeking his advice almost to the very end. On July 6th, 1974, she wrote to him about some mislaid manuscripts relating to her mesmeric 'cure':

I don't in the least suppose you can help me... But I had rather tell you what is on my mind about it. I wrote, at Tynemouth, a diary of my case and experience under the mesmeric treatment... Now where are those mss? I cannot find them... Now, dear friend, do you think you ever saw that statement? (F.F. Miller, pp. 130-131).

After Harriet's death, Atkinson was clearly still sufficiently involved in her affairs for him to be consulted with regard to the first biography.

Mrs. Miller wrote:

My deepest obligations are due ... to Mr. Henry G. Atkinson, the dearest friend of Harriet Martineau's maturity. It is commonly known that she forbade by her will the publication of her private letters; but she showed her supreme faith in ... Mr. Atkinson, by specially exempting him from such prohibition, (F.F. Miller, pp. vii-viii).

Only Atkinson and Mrs. Chapman were so exempted, ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 407). Atkinson survived Harriet by eight years, and died in 1884.

What Mrs. Miller omitted to say in expressing her obligation to Atkinson - and her closeness to her subject in terms of time no doubt imposed the omission - was that the relationship between Harriet and Atkinson was, as we have seen, bizarre and curious, but extremely fascinating.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

- (1) Harriet Martineau: Eastern Life, present and past, (1848), i, p. 201, All the following references in the text are to this work.
- (2) The New Zealand Letters of Thomas Arnold the Younger, ed. James Bertram, (1966), p. 38; written from Fox How, March 28th, 1848.
- (3) H.G. Atkinson and Harriet Martineau: Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), p. v.

This work will in future be referred to as Letters on the Laws etc.

- (4) Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli, 1810-1850, (1852), i, pp. 198-199.
- (5) Harriet Martineau: Life in the Sick Room, (1844), p. 158.
- (6) Anna Jameson: Letters and Friendships, ed. Mrs. Steuart Erskine, (1915), p. 214; reported in a letter to Lady Byron.
- (7) Frances Anne Kemble: Further Records, 1848-1883, (1890), i, p. 54.

The following quotation in the text is from this work.

- (8) For information on Dr. Spurzheim, (1776-1829), see Chapter 1, note 17.
- Dr. Franz Joseph Gall, (1758-1828), German physiologist, anatomist and phrenologist:

believed that the brain consisted of a number of separate and distinct organs ... which could develop independently and to a different degree in different people. As these special areas grew and developed they produced their own swellings or bumps on the skull, which could be seen and felt from the outside of the head... It therefore became possible, Gall maintained, by feeling a man's skull, to decide which of his faculties were well-developed, and which under-developed. There were, he believed, twenty-seven of these separate cerebral 'organs', each corresponding to a particular 'faculty', John Liggett: The Human Face, (1974), pp.205-206.

In The Phrenological Magazine, May 1881, L.N. Fowler published 'Notes on Dr. Gall's skull', (Vol. 2, pp. 212-214).

- (9) Letters on the Laws etc., pp. 176, 211, 354-359.

Atkinson's insistence on Christ's miracles having been based on mesmeric power, (p. 176), ridiculed the Rev. George

Sandby's view, stated as follows :

What, then, it may now be asked, is the resemblance that exists between the miracles of the Saviour and the wonders of Mesmerism? We answer confidently, none whatever. An impassable gulf divides them. Both, indeed, proceed from the same Eternal Being; but the Mesmeric phenomena are nothing else than the product of a simple power in nature: while the marvels of Scripture arose from an interruption of those laws by which the government of the universe has been administered from creation. (Mesmerism and its Opponents, 1848, p. 245).

The Rev. Sandby was probably deeply offended by Atkinson's assault, having praised Atkinson highly, (Mesmerism and its Opponents pp. 125-126).

- (10) Harriet had indeed moved a long way from her earlier works:-

Devotional exercises, consisting of reflections and prayers for the use of young persons, etc., (1823); Devotional exercises with a Guide to the Study of the Scriptures, (1832); Addresses with prayers and original hymns for the use of Families, (1826); Traditions of Palestine, (1830), etc.

- (11) Edward Rea: A Study of Harriet Martineau, unpublished M.A. thesis University of Birmingham(1969), p. 318. This work^{is} later referred to as E. Rea.

- (12) George Eliot later wrote enthusiastically of Harriet and Atkinson:

Harriet Martineau called on Monday morning with Mr. Atkinson - very kind and cordial. Mr. Atkinson wrinkles up his forehead horizontally and draws in his lips - has a good anterior lobe, but I should think it is not well filled with blood ... I honour her for her powers and industry, The Letters of George Eliot ed. Gordon S. Haight, (1954) ii, pp. 4-5, in a letter to Sara Hennell, Jan. 21st, 1852.

Later, when George Eliot visited 'the Knoll', she wrote to the Brays on Oct. 21st, 1852:

The coach brought me to Miss Martineau's gate at half past six yesterday evening, and she was there with a beaming face to welcome me. Mr. Atkinson joined us this morning, and is a very agreeable addition ... Miss M is charming in her own home - quite handsome from her animation and intelligence, (Letters, ii, p. 62)

When Harriet died, George Eliot wrote of her Autobiography to Mrs. Bray on March 20th, 1877:

Many of the most interesting little stories in it about herself and others she had told me (and Mr. Atkinson) when I was staying with her, almost in the very same words ... She was a charming talker, and a perfect lady in her manners as a hostess, (Letters, vi, p. 354).

- (13) James Payn: Some Literary Recollections, (1884), p. 99. The following quotations in the text are from this work.
- (14) The Correspondence of Mary Russell Mitford, ed. Elizabeth Lee, (1914), p. 186. The following quotations are from this work.
- (15) Archbishop Richard Whately, (1787-1863), became D.D. in 1825 and Archbishop of Dublin in 1831. An independent liberal, he opposed slavery and was a founder of the Broad-Church view, favouring neither evangelicalism nor the Oxford Movement.

He was much interested in Mesmerism. Discussing 'Influence', he wrote: "I think there must be a certain mesmeric power possessed by some people in reference to some others,"

Miscellaneous Remains from the Common-Place Book of Richard Whately, D.D
ed. Miss E.J. Whately, (1864), p. 281.

He also wrote of Mesmerism in October 1844: "It has surely long since been beyond being pooh-poohed out of court as a thing not worth enquiring about," Life and Correspondence of Richard Whately D.D., (1868), ed. E. Jane Whately, p. 202. He proceeded to discuss the "talk of a magnetic fluid," observing, "but this is all mere guess," (ibid.). He said that Mesmerism might be useful in explaining "Scripture miracles," (p. 203), concluding: "animal magnetism is decidedly worthy of enquiry, and the delusion, if it be such, of exposure," (p. 204).

Harriet first met Archbishop Whately in Scotland in 1838, and wrote:

Whately, with his odd, over-bearing manners, and his unequal conversation, - sometimes rude and tiresome, and at other times, full of instruction, and an occasional drollery

coming out amidst a world of effort. Perhaps no person of all my acquaintance has from the first appeared to me so singularly over-rated as he was then. I believe it is hardly so now, (Autobiography, i, p. 255).

In 1846, when Harriet needed turf for her garden, she received a mysterious gift of some sods accompanied by a note explaining that they were a present from two poachers grateful for her Forest and Game Law Tales, (1845-1846), in which she had declared that the poor should be allowed to hunt wild creatures. It was Archbishop Whately who rejected her belief that the note was genuine, asserting that an educated person had written it. He later suggested that Harriet had written it herself, (Autobiography, i, p. 504).

Elizabeth Barrett Browning could not resist joking of Harriet's friendship with Whately, writing to Browning on June 30th, 1845: "And Miss Martineau is practising mesmerism and miracles on all sides and counts on Archbishop Whately as a new adherent. I even fancy that he has been to see her in the character of a convert," Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 1845-1846, ed. R.W.B. Browning, (1899), i, p. 112.

Harriet and Atkinson were not the only mesmerists to quote the venerable cleric in their works: the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend included a quotation of Whately's on the title-page of his Mesmerism Proved True, (1854).

- (16) Diaries of William Charles Macready, ed. William Toynbee, (1912), ii, p. 491.
- (17) Amy Cruse: The Victorians and their Books, (1935), p. 91.

Mary Howitt, (1799-1888), miscellaneous writer, collaborated with her husband, William Howitt, (1792-1879), in poetical and other works. She wrote children's tales, learned Swedish and Danish while resident in Germany, and translated Hans Andersen's tales. In later life she was a convert to Catholicism.

- (18) Catherine and Susanna Winkworth: Memorials of Two Sisters, ed.

M.J. Shaen, (1908), pp. 65-66.

Selina Winkworth was referring to the historian J.A. Froude, (1818-1894). Atkinson denounced F's article: "To my mind, F's article and the one in the Westminster are full of sheer assertion and error and bad taste" (Autobiography, ii, p. 50).

- (19) Unpublished letters of Matthew Arnold, ed. Arnold Whitridge, Yale, (1923), pp. 26-27.

- (20) The Brontës, Their Lives, Friendships and Correspondence, (Shakespeare Head), ed. T.J. Wise, (1932), iii, p. 208. letter to James Taylor, Feb. 11, 1851.

- (20a) Mrs Gaskell: The Life of Charlotte Brontë, (1857), Everyman ed., (1971), p. 330.

Harriet, "has dined with the Fletchers, with Dr. Davy, and drank tea with Mrs. Arnold - and they are all charmed with her," (Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, (1939), 'The Later Years', (iii), 1841-1850, p. 1243. But Mrs. Arnold's delighted warmth towards Harriet cooled. Henry Crabb Robinson wrote in his diary on April 2nd, 1851, (after publication of the Letters):

I had a call from Quillinan - quite unexpected... Mrs. Arnold has, Qu tells me, broken of all acquaintance with H Martineau on account of her daughter, and this H.M. complains of. She is said to have replied - That others before have been persecuted for their opinions, but this is the first time that anyone has declined her acquaintance on account of hers - I can suppose that she deems this an incredible sacrifice from excess of intolerance, Diary of Henry Crabb Robinson, Dr. William's library, London, typescript, vol. xxii, Wednesday, April 2nd, 1851, p. 296.

("her daughter" is probably a reference to Matthew Arnold's elder sister Jane; Quillinan is the poet Edward Quillinan, 1791-1851, who died at Ambleside only three months later of acute inflammation caused by a cold caught on a fishing excursion).

Mrs. Wordsworth too was at first enthusiastic. Mary Russell Mitford wrote to Charles Boner in April 1846: "Mr. Robinson

said that Miss Martineau was much in favour, not only with Mr. Wordsworth, but with his female coterie, Mrs. Fletcher, Miss Fenwick, Mrs. Arnold, and Mrs. Wordsworth..." Letters of Mary Russell Mitford, ed R. Brimley Johnson, (1925), p. 202.

After the publication of the Letters, however, Mrs. Wordsworth wrote viciously to the Thomas Hutchinsons on Oct. 11th, 1851:

Miss Martineau, too, to my annoyance has returned, and she told Mr. Carter the other day she was coming to call. The announcement has turned me out of doors every day, when not raining, after two o.c., to avoid her. She is a pest. The Letters of Mary Wordsworth, 1800-1855, ed. Mary Bertram, (1958), p. 334.

- (22) J. Drummond and C.B. Upton: The Life and Letters of James Martineau, (1902), i, p. 36. This work will in future be referred to as Life etc. of J. Martineau.
- (23) James said: "from certain forgotten numbers of the Zoist I disinterred some lucubrations of Mr. Atkinson's, the mere citation of which rendered his authority ridiculous," (Life etc. of J. Martineau, i, p.224)

The following is a catalogue of Atkinson's publications, including material relating to him and articles etc. which he wrote after James' review, and which James therefore did not consult. The list excludes the collaborative Letters:-

In the Zoist, Vol. Mar. 1843 - Jan. 1844.
 p. 134, Atkinson's paper on mesmerism and phrenology, read by him to the Phrenological Society.
 p. 137, Atkinson on the cast of the Rev. Mr. Moffat's head.
 pp. 137-139, Atkinson reads a paper on the character of John Varley, painter and astrologer.
 p. 142, H.G. Atkinson, F.G.S., elected as Hon. Curator of the Phrenological Society, March 31st, 1843.
 pp. 143-148, letter from Atkinson, (Nov. 17th, 1842), on the conduct of certain members of the Phrenological Society.
 p. 220, Atkinson joins the committee of the Phrenological Association. Oct. 1843:-
 p. 263, Atkinson took the chair at the Society's meeting, (July 6th, 1843).
 pp. 277-284, Atkinson's paper on the cast of the late Lord Eldon's head. Jan. 1844:-
 pp. 390-392, Atkinson's paper on the Organ of Size, (Nov. 15th, 1843).

The Zoist, Vol. 2, Apr. 1844 - Jan. 1845:

p. 163-185, Atkinson exhibits and delivers a paper on casts of a family of idiots at Downham, Norfolk, (see also annotation note 25, Chapter 6).

pp. 239-240, Atkinson cures a case of ophthalmia with mesmerism.

The Phreno-Magnet and Mirror of Nature:

Vol. 1, pp. 220-222: Letter from Atkinson, (July 1843), claiming his discovery of Mesmero-phrenology and of an additional organ in the lesser brain.

pp. 238-240: Second letter from Atkinson, (Aug. 8th, 1843), claiming his discovery of Mesmero-phrenology a month earlier than Mr. Mansfield's discovery of it in Dec. 1841.

The Phrenological Magazine:

Vol. 2, (1881),

May, 1881, pp. 201-204: Analysis of Perception, by H.G. Atkinson.

p. 343: Clairvoyance, by Atkinson.

(p. 344: Reference to Atkinson).

- (24) John Stevenson Bushnan: Miss Martineau and her Master, (1851). All the following quotations in the text are from this work. Bushnan, (c. 1808-1884), was well-equipped for his task of reviewing the Letters. He obtained his M.D. at Heidelberg in 1830; his qualifications - Fellow of the Royal Physicians of Edinburgh, Physician to the Metropolitan Free Hospital, etc. - were listed on the title page of his review, a full-length book of 170 pages.
- (25) Sylvanus Urban: The Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. 35, May 1851, pp. 519 and 523.
- (26) In Thomas A. Noble's George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life, Yale, (1965), Noble notes the relationship between Comteanism and 19th century ideas of positivism and social responsibility. He sees Comte as having a strong influence upon George Eliot's "Religion of Humanity" (p. 64), which he regards as the neo-humanistic creed of one who had lost her old religious faith while retaining her social consciousness.

Harriet, too, had lost her faith, and E. Rea notes that she, "noticed a connection... between phreno-mesmerism and radical politics. The convictions of the mesmerists, their materialist and necessarian philosophy ... anticipated Comte," (E. Rea, p. 16).

- (27) Jonathan Miller: 'Mesmerism', The Listener, Vol. 90, Nov. 22nd, 1973, p. 690.
- (28) Dictionary of Philosophy, ed. Dagobert D. Runes, (1951), pp. 60-61.
- (29) The British Medical Journal, Aug. 19th, 1876, described Harriet's bequest as a "peculiar provision", noting, "By the second codicil dated October 5th, 1872, this direction is revoked." (p.250).

The journal quoted Harriet's reason for revoking her bequest:

I wish to leave it on record, that this alteration ... is not caused by any change of opinion as to the importance of scientific observation on such subjects, but is made in consequence merely of a change in circumstances in my individual case, (ibid.).

James Payn wrote that, when Harriet had told Mr. Shepherd she intended leaving her ears to a surgeon, Mr. Toynbee, (as was described in Chapter 1), Shepherd had been horrified. However:

The fact was, in the interests of science, Miss Martineau had already left her head to the Phrenological Society. I asked the doctor how he came to know that. 'Oh', he said, 'she told me so herself; she has left ten pounds in her codicil to me for cutting it off, Some Literary Recollections, (1884), pp. 126-127.

CHAPTER SIX : HARRIET MARTINEAU'S STORIES CONCERNING MESMERIC CLAIRVOYANCE;
PROPAGATION OF MESMERIC 'TRUTH' THROUGH FICTION

In Birmingham University Library, there are manuscripts of two stories concerning mesmeric clairvoyance.

Mrs. Chapman reproduced the texts of these in 'Memorials of Harriet Martineau', Autobiography, ii, pp. 463-471, but she assumed that the stories were as 'true' as their title implies. She did not attempt to edit or annotate them, or to handle them in any sense critically, beyond saying that Harriet's "grave political labours were occasionally enlivened by narrative of previous experiences, which she had written out at the time of their occurrence under the following title:- Two True Stories about Clairvoyance..."

Apart from this, and a reference to the events described in the stories, by Mrs. Bosanquet, (pp. 162-163), who also assumes them to be as 'true' as their title claims, the events related are not referred to by any of the other biographers.

These stories are, however, of some importance in considering and understanding Harriet Martineau's attitude towards Mesmerism and clairvoyance, and to fiction and didacticism in general. It seems likely, as will be discussed later, that the stories are not 'factual' or 'true', but may be 'fictionalised facts', handled in such a way with a definite didactic purpose in mind. They are therefore worth reading and discussing within the context of Harriet's life, work, and view of Mesmerism.

The stories are dated 1870 in the Birmingham University Library catalogue where they are numbered HM 1402.(1).

The first story is written on nine sides of notepaper and is about 1,500 words in length. The second story, written on ten sides of notepaper, is slightly longer.

The handwriting in which the stories appear is difficult to identify. There are three possible writers - Harriet herself, or either of her secretaries, her nieces Jane and Maria Martineau.

Harriet's handwriting is unlike that of the stories. Examples of both her neat handwriting, (e.g. the Review of Villette, HM 1403 in the collection, which Edward Rea identifies as her writing, (2)), and of her less-careful script, (e.g. Letter 105 in the collection, again identified by E. Rea), show certain similarities to the handwriting of the stories. For example, both of these letters share with the stories the crossing-out by means of three short, sloping lines, the last of pairs of brackets being consistently almost a straight, vertical line; the tendency of the handwriting to 'droop' at the end of each line, etc. However, in a general sense the style of both Harriet's neat and less-careful hands has a totally different appearance from that of the manuscript stories.

If the stories have been correctly dated as being written in 1870, Maria Martineau could not possibly have written them from Harriet's dictation, because she died in 1864, in which case the handwriting would almost certainly be that of Jane Martineau, who replaced Maria as Harriet's secretary on Maria's death. However, the compiler of the catalogue appears to ascribe this date to them because, attached to the stories, there is an envelope postmarked 'Birmingham 1870' and addressed to Harriet at Ambleside. The envelope bears the words: "Emma of Bolton's Clairvoyance: H. Martineau's Narrative." This handwriting is quite unlike that of the address on the envelope, but is similar to that of the stories, (e.g. it has the characteristic, incorrectly-positioned possessive apostrophe - "Martineaus"). It seems likely, however, that the envelope was used later to contain the manuscripts, in which case the date of 1870 for the writing of the stories appears to be incorrect.

Harriet would have been unlikely to wish to record the details of the events in the stories as late as 1870. The events clearly date from the time when Harriet's interest in mesmeric phenomena was at its height, c. 1845- c. 1850. The events can in fact be dated to about 1849, apart from the statement at the opening of the first story to the effect that the events occurred "early in 1849". The reference to Harriet's house as being "just built", (she moved into 'the Knoll' in 1846), and to her Eastern Life being "lately published," (it appeared in 1848), support the view that the events occurred in 1849. The fact that the details in the narratives are so clear and specific makes it unlikely that the events were left undocumented until as late as twenty-one years after they were supposed to have occurred. I therefore suggest that the stories were actually written down in the mid-1850's, (certainly a few years after 1849, since Harriet remarks in the second story, "there was no telegraph within reach from hence at that time"). This being so, they can be ascribed to the hand of Maria Martineau, (who was alive until 1864), disregarding the cataloguer's dating of 1870.

There are certain characteristic idiosyncracies of punctuation in the handwriting in which the stories are written. One is a misuse of possessive apostrophes, (e.g., the writing of "Mr. Haddocks'" instead of "Mr. Haddock's"), and another is the consistent use of commas followed by hyphens to denote pauses, thus: , - . A third is the apparently indiscriminate underlining of words regardless of any particular significance. These faults suggest that Harriet did not write down the stories; she is too meticulous a scribe, even in her less-neat handwriting, to be guilty of, for example, the misused possessive apostrophe. Some of the earlier manuscripts in the collection, however, (e.g. HM 1404 and HM 1388-9), written probably in Maria's hand, do possess these idiosyncracies.

It is therefore probable that Maria Martineau wrote down the stories from Harriet's dictation.

In transcribing the stories I have endeavoured to reproduce exactly the features of the manuscripts, except that certain punctuation errors - the incorrect possessive apostrophes - have been corrected for the sake of convenience and clarity.

Mrs. Chapman's version of the stories deviates from the original manuscripts in several ways. She corrects the misused possessive apostrophes, writes '&' in full as 'and', and writes out other abbreviations in full, e.g. Harriet's 'wd', 'cd', 'shd', etc. Other more important differences include changes in phraseology and wording, omission of phrases etc.; she also has some spelling deviations, e.g. 'mesmerized' and 'gray' for Harriet's 'mesmerised' and 'grey'.

The more substantial textual variants are recorded in footnotes to each page, marked (i) (ii) (iii) etc. These textual notes also record alterations and insertions in the manuscripts. Notes concerned with the material of the stories, numbered in the usual way, will be found immediately after each text. Other notes, referring to the Chapter as a whole, appear, as usual, at the end of the Chapter.

Two True (1) Stories about Clairvoyance(2)First Story

Early in 1849(3) I stayed a few days at Mr. S. Duckinfield Darbshire's (4), at Manchester. One night, after a party, Mrs. Darbshire told me that she had to go, the next morning, to Bolton(5), & she hoped I wd go with her. She had a question to ask of the girl Emma(6), whose strange powers as a Somnambule(7) had just become known, through an accident. Mrs D's question related to some missing property (not, I think, her own, but a friend's). Emma's information had recently led to the discovery of some mislaid banknotes, & the saving of the character of a clerk(8); & this induced Mrs D's experiment. I shall say nothing about that business, however, but shall relate only incidents within my own experience and observation.

At first I refused to go, being unwilling to countenance the practice of exposing invalids (as somnambules very commonly are) to be mesmerised for money and urged beyond the natural exercise of the faculty, - whatever it be. At bedtime, however, Mrs D said, "I think if you consider that your going will make no difference to the girl, - that it will be merely two ladies being in the room instead of one, you will see that you may as well use the opportunity." I was very willing, of course; & I went.

It was a bitter cold winter's morning; & when we left the station at Bolton(9), Mrs D said she hoped we might meet Brother Charles(10) presently, & not have to wait long in the street. She had sent him a request to meet her at Mr Haddock's (11), (where Emma lived) but it had now occurred to her that we had better meet him in the street, that she might caution him against mentioning either of our names in Mr Haddock's house. We did meet him, a few yards beyond Mr Haddock's shop: he was introduced to me, & agreed to mention no name during the interview. Mr Charles Darbshire (I believe a bachelor) lived eight miles from Bolton; & I think he & I had met once before: but we were quite strangers to each other. Of me & my ways he then knew nothing⁽ⁱ⁾ but that I lived at Ambleside(12), & that I had been much interested in the facts of Mesmerism(13). For his part, - what he knew of Emma was the recovery of the banknotes, by her information, - he being one of the witnesses of the transaction.

We entered the shop, - an apothecary's shop(14). Emma was the maid-of-all-work to Mr. Haddock (11). As we were not expected, we had to wait in the shop while the fire was lighted in the sitting-room, & while, doubtless, Emma dressed - I will say nothing of Mrs Darbshire's business, but merely remark that she & I were the only persons present, after Mr C Darbshire went away, except that Mr Haddock went out & came in, two or three times, as business called him. He had nothing to do with Emma while she was under my hands.

She was a vulgar girl, anything but handsome, and extremely ignorant. It does not matter to my story; but it is the fact, that she cd not read(15). - What I saw disposed me to try⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ what I cd make of her, when Mrs D's

(i) Mrs Chapman reads "he knew nothing."

(ii) In the ms "the Haddocks" has been crossed through and corrected.

(iii) In the ms "see" has been crossed through and "try" substituted.

business was done. I mesmerised her(16), & soon saw she was fast. She exclaimed at once that "the lady had warmed her."(17).

After a good deal of very striking disclosure on her part, it suddenly struck me that I might try her power of seeing absent places (iv) & persons. So I took a handful - a large handful - of letters from my pocket, - Mrs D asking me what I was doing. I told her she wd soon see: & so she did; & so did Mr C.D, who returned in the middle of my experiment.

I was aware that the girl cd not read: but, to make all sure, I chose a letter wh was not in an envelope, & was altogether blank outside. There was not a scratch of ink on it, & it was close folded. I asked Emma who that letter was from. She clapped it on her head(18), close folded, & said a gentleman wrote it who was then walking up & down his parlour, with a silk handkerchief in his hand. Her account of his appearance, ways, & habit of mind was as accurate as possible.

"Who is it?" asked Mrs D. "Who is she talking about?"

"I will tell you all about it by & by," I said: "surely not now."

Emma described the room; but I need not, unless I mention one particular. It was a London dining-room(19), one of hundreds wh anybody might venture on describing. One article, however, Emma mentioned as "a long-down picture"(20), hanging in fact(v) where she said it did. The gentleman was Mr Atkinson(21), in his own dining-room; & the "long-down picture" was a part plan, part bird's eye view of Rome, - two or three times longer than it was broad.

"Now," said I, "go into the next room & tell me what you see there."

"The next room!" said she. "There is a room; but I can't get into it: there is no door" ... and, moving in a troubled way,-

"how can I get into it when there is no door?"

I suppose somebody gets into it, to clean it," said I.

"O yes; They go in by the hall".

"Well! do you go in by the hall."

"Yes, I can do that. Ah! this is a smaller room. There are some cut stones stuck up, - one, two, three .."

"Cut stones!" said Mrs Darkishire; & I begged her to wait.

"And there are some bookshelves :- not many books: there are boxes. Some are grey, - some are green; - they have (vi) large white marks upon them, - letters, I think. They are in rows, - a lot of them, one on top of another between the shelves."

"Any books?"

"Yes, some: only one shelf of them."

"Anything else?"

She writhed in her chair, & shuddered, & spoke unwillingly & hesitatingly.

"Ye..es; there are some things - on the top shelf. - I don't like them," shuddering much.

"Tell me about them."

"Well! there are six on 'em; & one is very well: but the others.." & she shuddered.

"Go on."

"Well: there is one below(vii) in the shop, - one of the sort."

This was true: I had seen it when we entered).

Mrs D cd wait no longer. "What is she talking about?" she exclaimed.

"She talks of 'things' & 'things': - what things are they?"

(iv) Mrs. Chapman reads, "seeing about places."

(v) "In fact" is an insertion in the ms.

(vi) Mrs. Chapman reads "and they have."

(vii) "below" is an insertion in the ms.

I said to Emma "you talk of 'things'. What sort of things are they?"

"Well, I can't tell you what they are."

"Are they apples & oranges, or what?"

"O no, no! nothing of that sort. I shd say" - & she shuddered out her words, & spoke doubtfully, - "they are a sort of Heads. - But, one goes this way," putting up her hands, & describing a wide arch from side to side of her head, - "and one goes that way," - describing a great arch from the nape of her neck to the root of her nose. This was enough; & I relieved her from her painful state of disgust by turning to other objects.

This may end my first story; for I cd have nothing more remarkable to tell.

As soon as we were out of the house, I explained it all to my two companions.

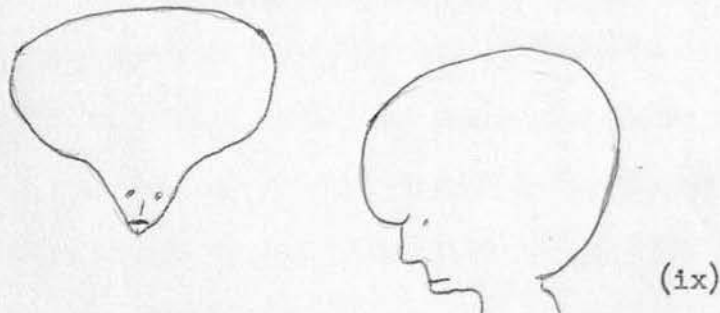
The second room was the place of deposit of some curious property of Mr. Atkinson's deceased (viii) father, as well as some odd things of his own.

The old Lord Elgin(22) gave h~~y~~m (sic) Mr. Atkinson Sr. (23) some of the most fragmentary of the Elgin marbles(24); & these "cut stones" were on pedestals in various parts of the room.

Mr. Atkinson Sr was an architect of eminence; & the plans &c of the mansions & grounds of many noblemen & gentlemen were kept by him, as deeds are by lawyers, in tin boxes, - in this case, grey & green, with the names of the owners & estates painted outside, in large white letters, - the boxes being shelved as described.

Above them was a shelf of books; & above them, on the top shelf, six "things" wh, as it happened, I had forgotten, till the girl's horrors brought them back to mind.

They were six casts of heads :- one, as she said - nothing remarkable, or "very well." The other five were casts of the heads of a family in Norfolk(25), - hideous beyond expression, & two of them enormous, as Emma described, - one in length, the other in breadth.



Of course, I told Mr. C. Darbishire that I shd be ready to bear witness to the reality of Emma's powers at that date, - so far at least as (what is called) "thought-reading" is concerned, - the insult, & imputation of imposture which are the weapons of the prejudiced, the ignorant, & people who are too indolent to ascertain facts for

(viii) "deceased" is an insertion in the ms.

(ix) Mrs. Chapman does not give sketches of the casts.

themselves.

I implored him, however, to do all he could to prevent the girl being overworked, or over urged; & thus to save her from the danger of filling up her failing power by material from the imagination, & at last, resorting to tricks, deceiving herself & others, rather than give up.

Annotations to the First Story

- (1) "True" Stories: A discussion of the 'truth' of these stories follows the notes to the Second Story.
- (2) "Clairvoyance": The psychic pronouncements of Emma in these stories do not concern the prediction of future events, and are therefore a particular form of 'clairvoyance'. Charles Baudouin subscribes to the popular over-simplification that clairvoyance is synonymous with prediction, when he generalises: "We should abstain from attempts to learn the future by consulting mediums and clairvoyants, whose fantastic prophecies will germinate in our minds into veritable suggestions, and will tend to realise themselves ...," Suggestion and Autosuggestion, (1945), p. 118.

In fact, not all instances of mediumship and clairvoyance are concerned with prophecy. W.E. Butler defines four main types of 'clairvoyance':- psychological, spatial, astral and spiritual, How to Develop Clairvoyance, (1968), pp. 15-34.

The Rev. Frederick G. Lee defines precisely the sort of clairvoyant whom Emma is revealed to be, when he speaks of the "clairvoyant medium" as one who "is able to see the scenes that are actually transpiring at the same time in another place, no matter how far distant," Glimpses of the Supernatural, (1875), ii, p.150.

The Zoist is full of accounts of Mesmeric clairvoyance, many of them of this nature. One that was particularly close to Emma's activities was the case of 'far-sight' demonstrated by Henrietta Price of Stourbridge on Oct. 5th, 1843; The Zoist, Vol. 1, Mar. 1843 - Jan. 1844, pp. 457-469.

There was much interest in this clairvoyant phenomenon. Susanna Winkworth wrote that she listened to W.R. Greg's "Stories of clairvoyants describing events at a distance," Memorials of Two Sisters, ed. M.J. Shaen, (1908), p. 18, while H. G.

Atkinson wrote: "We know that some can see distant objects without the use of the eye," Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), p. 50.

Finally, Coleridge saw a comparison between instances of 'far-sight' experienced by Methodists and the visions of mesmeric clairvoyants, The Table Talk and Omniana, ed. H.N. Coleridge, (1917), p. 83.

- (3) "Early in 1849": These events occurred five years after Harriet's mesmeric 'cure', by which time she had had considerable experience of mesmeric phenomena, including clairvoyance, (see Chapters 3 and 4).

- (4) "Mr. S. Duckinfield Darbshire": The family, as far as I have been able to ascertain, was not that of Francis Darbshire, a friend and fellow student of Harriet's brother James, to whom J. Drummond and C.B. Upton refer: "Francis Darbshire, to whom young Martineau was so strongly attached that their rather exclusive comradeship did not meet the full approval of the other students," The Life and Letters of James Martineau, (1902), i, p. 31.

Francis Darbshire died of consumption in 1833.

It is a curious coincidence that Francis Darbshire was educated at Manchester New College, and that Harriet makes her Darbshires residents of Manchester. The failure to trace any references to Mr. S. Duckinfield Darbshire and his family as even existing, let alone as having any connection whatever with Harriet, and the 'Mancunian' coincidence, suggest that Harriet was probably using a pseudonym here - one perhaps suggested by real-life events, people and circumstances.

- (5) "to Bolton": From Manchester to Bolton is a distance of 11 miles.
- (6) "Emma": Again, no biographical evidence to substantiate the existence of a clairvoyant somnambule named 'Emma' of Bolton, implies

that she too was probably a 'fictional' character. This aspect of the stories, of their being 'fictionalised fact', will be discussed later.

- (7) "Somnambule": A 'somnambule' is, literally, a 'sleep-walker'. There was great interest at the time in this phenomenon, as reflected by works like Henry Cockton's novel Sylvester Sound the Somnambulist, (1844), a comic treatment of the subject.

Mesmeric somnambulism as here, however, or the sleep-walking trance induced by Mesmerism, was the state in which clairvoyant activity was considered possible. The whole of Book ii of the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend's Facts in Mesmerism, (1844), was devoted to the subject of Mesmeric Somnambulism.

The Phrenological Magazine discussed the case of a French criminal who was arrested for committing a crime, and was later discovered to be living "in a state of constant somnambulism," Vol. 2, April 1881, p. 171.

- (8) "discovery of some mislaid banknotes ... saving of the character of a clerk" : These incidents are an interesting parallel of one of Harriet's earlier political-economy tales. In Berkeley the Banker, part 2, Illustrations of Political Economy, (1833), v, pp. 1-144, Harriet told the story of Edgar Morrison, a member of a gang of forgers, who, when his wife Hesther sent a letter containing money to her mother, Mrs. Parndon "had intercepted it, and helped himself with a part of the contents, substituting notes..." (p. 123); consequently he "was lodged in Newgate," (ibid.), and then executed, (p. 132), unlike the clerk who was proved innocent by Emma of Bolton's clairvoyance.

The implication here is that, in constructing the fiction of her clairvoyant stories, Harriet's recollection of the political economy tale suggested to her, perhaps, the idea of Emma's previous clairvoyant revelation.

- (9) "the station at Bolton"; In 1849 this was the original station which existed from the time when the first trains departed from Bolton on May 29th, 1838. In the early years, "... Senior Railmen were much put about because the Manchester trains travelled on the down line and the trains from Manchester arrived on the Up line."

The first Bolton Trinity Street Station was not opened until May 8th, 1871, and the present station, (begun in 1899), was opened on Feb. 20th, 1904.

Information: article, 'Public Notice', Bolton Bulletin Number One, pp. 11-12, (a house newspaper published for the benefit of the staff), date unknown, the Bolton Railway Station and Line.

Material supplied by C.E. Dakin and A.G. Walters, Asst. Area Manager and Area Manager, British Rail, Trinity Street Station, Bolton.

- (10) "Brother Charles": Since he is afterwards identified as Charles Darbishire, he is unlikely to have been Mrs. Darbshire's brother, but her husband's brother.

The use of the term 'brother' for 'brother-in-law' was common. In Emma, (1816), Chapter 9, Jane Austen refers to Emma Woodhouse's brother-in-law John Knightley, (her sister Isabella's husband), as her 'brother'.

Harriet, too, referred to her brother-in-law, Dr. Greenhow, as her "brother", Autobiography, i, p. 473.

- (11) "Mr. Haddock": Again, the name seems to be entirely fictional.
- (12) "lived at Ambleside": Her home was 'the Knoll', Ambleside, Westmorland, where she had lived since April, 1846, Autobiography, i, p. 503).
- (13) "interested in the facts of Mesmerism": the interest was based on her own cure and subsequent experimentation.
- (14) "Apothecary's shop": an 'apothecary' was a 'druggist, pharmaceutical chemist', (Oxford Dictionary). Harriet wrote that apothecaries' shops were "full of deadly drugs", Letters on Mesmerism, (1845), p.63.

- (15) Emma's illiteracy would have concerned Harriet, whose many interests included Education. She wrote Household Education in 1849. She was especially interested in the education of women.
- (16) "I mesmerised her": No doubt Harriet followed the procedure as outlined in Deleuze's Instruction pratique sur le Magnétisme animal, (1825), see Chapter 2, note 22.
- (17) "the lady had warmed her": Harriet referred to the mesmeric phenomenon of the mesmerist being able to induce a feeling of warmth in an entranced subject, in Letters on Mesmerism, (1845), p. 1.
- (18) "She clapped it on her head": A common clairvoyant technique is for the subject to 'contact' a selected individual by holding some possession of his or hers to the brow. W.E. Butler refers to this technique, which is known as 'psychometry':-

Professor Denton, a noted geologist of his time, who experimented with his sister, Mrs. Ann Denton Cridge ... found that if she held a geological specimen to her forehead, she was able to see, in visual images, something of its past history ... This power of reading the past through the use of some object as a centre of concentration he named 'psychometry'... some find that ... when they are touching old furniture or antiques, dim pictures and emotions arise in their minds..." (How to Develop Clairvoyance, 1968, pp. 22-23).

- (19) "A London dining-room": H. G. Atkinson's home was No. 18, Upper Gloucester Place, Dorset Square, London, (The Zoist, Vol. 1. Mar. 1843- Jan. 1844, p. 277).
- (20) "A long-down picture": This was clearly not a picture of a vertical rectangular shape, as implied, but of a horizontal rectangular shape. It was obviously some form of mural.
- (21) "Mr. Atkinson": Henry George Atkinson, (c.1815-1884), mesmerist, phrenologist, life-long friend of Harriet Martineau and co-author with her of Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851).
- (22) "The old Lord Elgin": Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin and 11th of Kincardine, (1766-1841), of 'Elgin marbles' fame, (see following note 24).
Harriet knew his son James, 8th Earl of Elgin and 12th of Kincardine, (1811-1863). He visited her during her later illness.

He became Governor and Captain General of Jamaica, Governor General of Canada, Postmaster General and, finally Governor General of India.

- (23) "Mr. Atkinson Sr": Atkinson's father was William Atkinson, (c. 1773-1839):

Born at Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham. He began as a carpenter, but through the patronage of the Bishop of Durham became a pupil of James Wyatt, entered the Royal Academy Schools, and won the Gold Medal in 1797. He enjoyed the patronage of many influential people: built up a large and flourishing practice: was a talented chemist, geologist and botanist: introduced 'Atkinson's Cement' (or Roman Cement) to London, where it appeared in use for the first time about 1816. Architect to the Ordnance Office 1813-1829, and designed the Ordnance Office in Pall Mall: in 1805 published Picturesque Views of Cottages. Dora Ware: A Short Dictionary of British Architects, (1967), pp. 28-29. The entry includes a list of houses and buildings remodelled and altered by Atkinson.

- (23) "The Elgin Marbles": Greek statues and friezes, once belonging to the

Temple of the Parthenon in Athens, by the sculptor Pheidias (5th century B.C). Now in the British Museum, they were brought to England by the 7th Earl of Elgin, (see note 22 above). He was the British Ambassador at Constantinople in 1799-1802, and resolved to remove the marbles while in office there. He was accused of gross vandalism, and defended himself in a pamphlet entitled Memorandum on the Earl of Elgin's Pursuits in Greece, (1810). The collection was purchased by the nation for £36,000, and placed in the British Museum in 1816. Lord Elgin had spent over £50,000 on removing them. Among the finest sculptures in Europe, they made a deep impression on artists and poets, including, Keats, (1795-1821), and his friend B.R. Haydon, (1786-1846).

Byron expressed his horror at Elgin's action in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, (1812), canto II, stanza 11:

But who, of all the plunderers of yon Fane
On high - where Pallas lingered, loth to flee
The latest relic of her ancient reign -
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?
Blush, Caledonia! Such thy son could be!

- (25) "Casts of the heads of a family of idiots in Norfolk": As a phrenologist, Atkinson's interest in skull-formation naturally led him to keep

such a collection of specimen casts. Atkinson's father was also interested in phrenology, hence his original ownership of the casts, (T. Bosanquet, p. 158).

The Zoist, Vol. 2, April 1844 - Jan. 1845, No. 6, pp. 163-185, related Atkinson's exhibition and delivery of a paper on the casts of a family of idiots at Downham in Norfolk, and there is a sketch of the casts reproduced opposite p. 162.

The taking of a phrenological cast was a complex procedure which involved immersing the head in plaster. The entire process is described in detail in The Zoist, vol. 2, pp. 39-41: Mr. Butler of Gower Place, "an excellent young sculptor," described how to take a cast.

Harriet was interested in idiocy, so the fact that Atkinson's casts were of idiots is especially appropriate. She studied an idiot boy "with the deepest interest from the first year of his life till he died at the age of nineteen," Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), p. 69. In the same work she discussed Dr. Howe's report on Idiocy to the legislature of Massachusetts, (pp. 89-96).

Again, the family being of Downham in Norfolk was of additional interest, because Harriet was a native of that county, born in Norwich on June 12th, 1802; later, at Ambleside, she employed a Norfolk dairyman and his wife, and it was a Norfolk country gentleman who financed her translation of Comte. She herself referred to her "Norfolk notions of cleanliness", (Autobiography, i, p. 445).

For further information, relating to George Eliot's and Charlotte Bronte's interest in phrenology, see note 14, Chapter 2.

Second Story

After I got home, it struck me that it might be well to ascertain Emma's faculty in regard to myself, - to try in some way wh shd be indisputable if it succeeded, her power of clairvoyance in the case of a person with whom Mesmeric relations had been established(26). I therefore wrote to Mr. Chas Darbshire, who was frequently seeing her, to explain my notion. I told no person whatsoever of my writing to him; & he, living alone, told no person whatever of my letter. Between us, we managed so that communication with Emma, - if anybody had known of the project, was impossible, in point of time. There was no telegraph within reach from hence at that time(27), if there had been anybody able to use it.

I wrote on a Thursday, saying that for a week from the hour when he wd receive my letter he had my leave to learn from Emma what I was doing at any time between 9 a.m. & 9 p.m.

(The immediate method was put into my head by Mr. C. D. having said, once before, that he was tempted to put a note of mine on her head, to see what she wd say; but that he considered that it wd be hardly right to do this without my leave. He had therefore never referred at all to me & my visit, & did not know how far the girl was conscious of it).

Mr. C. D. received my letter the next morning - Friday - at his home, 8 miles from Bolton. Very considerably remembering that it must be somewhat genant to me to be under possible inspection all day, & seeing the advantage of wasting no time, he determined to send me his report by the same day's post. In the afternoon he made his call at Mr. Haddock's, found Emma quite ill with a bad cold, & expected nothing from her while so "stuffed", stupid & headachy; but, as the Mesmerising(x) wd do her good, he tried what she cd do - giving no hint of any particular reason. He was so satisfied that she was confused & talking at random, that he presently broke off; & much surprised he was to find her accounts of things all right.

As I have said, he knew nothing more about my position here than that I lived at Ambleside. My house was just built(28), & whether I lived in lodgings, or how or where, he was entirely ignorant. Such was the fact; though it wd have made no difference in the essential points of the story if he had known my house as well as his own.

He put on Emma's head a folded paper, - blank except a few words wh told nothing & were not signed, & were written merely to establish the necessary relation. I had also breathed on the paper(29), for the same reason. Outside, it was blank; & it was never unfolded. As soon as she put it on her head she said she cd see "the lady that warmed her." The lady was sitting at a round table before the fire(30); & opposite the fire was a large window - a very large window(xi); & there was another window, on another side(xii), that opened down to the ground(31). The sofa, chairs & window-curtains were light coloured(xiii) &c &c - all correct. The only remarkable points of the description were two; - the

- (x) Mrs Chapman reads "as mesmerizing".
- (xi) Mrs Chapman omits "a very large window".
- (xii) Mrs Chapman reads "there was on another side another window".
- (xiii) "coloured" is an insertion in the ms.

sideboard having a white marble top(32), & the bookcase, wh she called "a right-up" bookcase. It was a straight, tall, narrow bookcase(33), made to fit in between two windows in our house in London(34) & looking exceedingly ugly in any other position.

"The lady" was fumbling in her work-box at the table, - turning things over. All this seemed so commonplace, & yet so unlikely (according to Mr C.D's notions) that the business stopped here; & he wrote an account of it after he got home, intending to call (unexpectedly) pretty early the next day, to see if the girl was in better condition. He wd carry his letter in his pocket, & finish & post it in Bolton, whatever was the result.

The girl was right in every particular. The time was near 5 of a February afternoon. I had come into the drawing room(xiv) from my work in the study, & was sitting in the dusk before dinner. I had sent my maid out to buy a piece of canvas for a new enterprise of woolwork(35); & I was looking out my needle & other needful things, ready to begin.

This was Friday afternoon, - my proposal having been posted on the Thursday evening.

On Saturday, Mr. C Darbshire ~~paid~~ his visit some hours earlier, - from half past 11 to just 1. He found Emma not much better, & had no expectations whatever from the interview.

"The lady that warmed her" was in another room today; - a long room, with a large bay-window at one end & the fireplace at the other. The furniture was black horse-hair(36), - all but the sofa, wh was light coloured. (All true). But the girl's interest was about the books. Such a quantity of books she had never seen before; what were they for? She began talking to "the lady", - asking why she had so many books, & whether she cd read the half of them. At last she came to what "the lady" was doing. She had a cloth in her hand, & was wiping & doing among some of the books. This upset the girl's credit with Mr. C. D, to whom it seemed more likely to be a servant-girl's dream than my occupation.

"Now she has got a book," Emma declared - "a big, square, brown book, & she is going to read it on the sofa. Now she is reading it".

Presently she declared this "tiresome". She shd not "wait long" if the lady did not leave off; & what a time this reading had gone on! At last she exclaimed

"Well, I shall not wait any longer, if you won't leave off." Then with a laugh,

"Ah! but you'd better leave off. You are not thinking about your book. You have got some dust on your hands, & you are thinking you will go upstairs & wash them. - Well, go! You'd better go!" - Presently,

"Ah! Now she's really going."

She described my going upstairs, & my standing before the glass, "smoothing her hair," said Emma; "there is a lady coming(xv)in - No, she has gone out again softly. I don't know that she is a lady exactly; but she is a nice-looking young person. And the lady never found out she came in."

(xiv) "the drawing room" is an insertion in the ms.

(xv) "looking" is altered in the ms to "coming".

Here they stopped, - Mr C. D as hopeless as the day before, - it seemed all so improbable, - & the girl was really so oppressed with her cold! - He left her at 1 p.m., went to a counting-house(37) to finish his letter, posted it himself, & went home to dinner. I received the letter the next morning - Sunday(38) - just after breakfast.

The facts were these. I had arranged my (xvi) books the day before (Friday) &, being tired, had left one shelf untouched. At 11 on Saturday, & on to about half past, I had a duster in my hand, & was dusting & placing the books. Having finished, I took up one of them, - a vol: of Mémoires of the French Institute(39), sent me just before by M. Ampère(40), for the sake of a paper on the Memnon at Thebes(41) (a propos to (xvii) something in my "Eastern Life," lately published)(42). The vol: was rather large, square, & with a yellowish brown back.

I read for a considerable time; but at length observed that my hands were dirty, - wanted to finish the paper, - hesitated, but presently went up to my room, & washed my hands.

So far I cd testify. When I had finished the letter, I rang for my maid(43). I asked her

"Do you remember whether, at any time yesterday, you came into my bedroom while I was there;"

After considering a moment, she answered, surprised,

"Why yes, Ma'am, I did. I was going to fill the waterjugs; & when I went in, you were before the glass: so I went out softly, thinking you did not see me."

"What time was that?"

After considering again, she said

"It must have been about a quarter to one: for I just finished(xviii) upstairs before I brought in your lunch at one."

This is my Second Story. Many have heard it: & no one, as far as I know, has ever treated it with levity or incivility. There is nothing new or exceptional in the facts. Every one who has paid any adequate attention to the subject is aware that such instances of clairvoyance are very common: but it does not often happen that allegations of fraud or fancy are so completely excluded as in this case. There may be people who, rather than believe facts that they have stiffened their minds against, wd charge Mr C. Darbishire & me with having fabricated the whole narrative: but, short of this, there seems to be no escape from an admission that there are facts in human nature wh require a good deal of humble & candid study, before we can honestly claim to know the extent & character of human powers. Prince Albert might well wonder, as he said he did, what men of science & physicians in England (xix) cd mean by neglecting such a department of study as this (44). And nobody ought to be surprised when, as a natural consequence of such neglect, such a hell-feast as (xx) the Witch-hanging in Salem⁽⁴⁵⁾ takes possession of a multitude of (professedly) educated people, in the 19th century, about a supposed commerce with the spirits of the dead(46). When due observation is directed upon such phenomena as those of Mesmerism, mankind will take a great new step onwards;

- (xvi) "my" is an insertion in the ms.
- (xvii) Mrs. Chapman reads "apropos to."
- (xviii) Mrs. Chapman reads "for I had just finished."
- (xix) "in England" is an insertion in the ms.
- (xx) "at" in the ms. is corrected to "as."

& meantime the candid have the advantage over the ignorant & scoffing that they are in possession of a very interesting & important kind of knowledge (xxi) of wh the others deprive themselves, not knowing what they lose(47). (xxii)

- (xxi) Mrs. Chapman reads "important knowledge." In the ms, from the words "important kind" onwards to the end of the story, the narrative is written at right angles to the concluding section, along the edge of the final page.
- (xxii) Mrs. Chapman adds the signature "Harriet Martineau".

Annotations to the Second Story

- (26) Having been Emma's mesmerist in the First Story, Harriet was thinking here in terms of "mesmeric rapport", of it being easier for Emma to contact Harriet clairvoyantly because she had already been under Harriet's influence and control when mesmerised by her the first time.

Harriet discussed different aspects of mesmeric rapport in Letters on Mesmerism, (1845), pp. 24, 31, 35, 36, etc. So did the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend in Facts on Mesmerism, (1844), pp. 42, 49, 72, (including the phenomenon of the subject feeling whatever the mesmerist feels, and being made to copy the actions of the mesmerist, etc); also in Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), pp. 37-38, (the mesmerist feeling the pain of his subject), 45-46, 63, 108, etc.

Mesmeric "rapport" was to an extent another element in Mesmerism which survived into hypnosis in the hypnotist's ability to 'control' his subject. Sir Oliver Lodge wrote:

The body ... can sometimes be found capable of responding to a foreign intelligence, - acting either telepathically through the mind, or telergically by a more direct process straight on the brain. Sometimes the controlling intelligence belongs to a living person, as in cases of hypnotism, Man and the Universe, (1908), p. 193.

Mesmeric experiments were in fact frequently conducted primarily to prove the 'truth' of mesmeric 'rapport', and of the ability of a mesmerist to influence a subject even from a distance. Professor Zöllner, discussing Mesmeric Influence, observed:

There remains only the question whether it is experimentally demonstrable that the human will is able to induce such vivid representations in the consciousness of another... Experiments of this kind have been, in fact, publicly instituted in Germany, by the magnetiser Hansen, of such a surprising and convincing nature, that it is impossible to doubt the reality of this influence of an individual intelligent will upon another, spatially distinct, individual, Johann Carl Friedrich Zöllner: Transcendental Physics, trans. C.C. Massey, (1882), pp. 171-172.

- (27) "No telegraph within reach from hence at that time": J. Moore and G.A. North of the Departmental Record Office, Central Headquarters, Post Office Records, London, supplied the following information:

The Post Office opened a telegraph office in Ambleside in 1870, (PMG Minute No. 6859. Post 35.293). Before this date there was no monopoly on the telegraph service and many private companies existed who had offices all over the country. Unfortunately our telegraph records prior to 1870 are limited and we are unable to find when the first private telegraph office was opened in Ambleside.

- (28) "My house was just built": 'The Knoll' was nearing completion when

Harriet and two servants moved in on April 7th, 1846,

(Autobiography, i, p. 503).

- (29) "I had also breathed on the paper": The mesmerists believed that if

one breathed on an object then it would become infused with the mesmeric medium, the fluid: the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend,

Facts in Mesmerism, (1844), pp. 172 and 331.

- (30) "A round table" ; The position of this table "before the fire" suggests that it was some form of occasional table.

- (31) Mrs. Chapman described the interior of 'the Knoll' in detail, including the various rooms, 'Memorials', Autobiography, ii, pp. 380-385.

- (32) The sideboard with a white marble top was probably the same as a side table with a marble top, "Tables intended to stand against the walls of a room and ornamented with a view to their situation," P. Macquoid and R. Edwards: The Dictionary of English Furniture, (1921), i, p. 252; there follow illustrated examples of such marble-topped tables, pp. 258-270, 274.

- (33) "'A right-up' bookcase": Tall, narrow bookcases such as this showed the influence of Thomas Sheraton, (1751-1806). "Sheraton's bookcases are marked by an increase of height in the lower portion, a reduction of width, and a general tendency to stilted proportions," Dictionary of English Furniture, (1921), i, p. 83.

- (34) "Our house in London": When Harriet went to London from Norwich in Dec. 1831, she lived first at her cousin Richard Martineau's house, 1, Chiswell Street, (Autobiography, i, p. 125); in Nov. 1832 she moved permanently to London, lodging first in Conduit Street, (Autobiography, i, p. 140), then in Aug. 1833 in Fluyder Street (behind Downing Street), Westminster, where her mother and her aunt joined her, (Autobiography, i, p. 187). The latter address is probably the London house referred to here.
- (35) "Canvas ... for woolwork": The canvas would be used as a backing on which a design would be worked in wool, to make chair-backs, etc. Harriet was a proficient needlewoman. She occupied much of her time in the Tynemouth sick-room, in needlework. She said that she used to do woolwork in the evenings, (Autobiography, ii, p. 89).
- (36) "Black horse hair": "The tail and mane of horses is in great demand for various purposes. The long tail hair is especially valuable for weaving into hair-cloth, mane hair and the short tail hair being, on the other hand, principally prepared and curled for stuffing the chairs, sofas and couches which are covered with the cloth manufactured from the long hair," Encyclopedia Britannica, 9th edtn., (1880), Vol. 11, p. 376.
- (37) "Counting-house": "Building, room, devoted to keeping accounts; office," (Oxford Dictionary).
- (38) "I received the letter ... Sunday" : Harriet may well have received a letter from Bolton delivered on a Sunday, though, since she was in Ambleside, it would not have been delivered on foot; the following information, which relates to deliveries on foot, is quoted purely to indicate that Sunday postal deliveries operated from Bolton in 1849: "During 1849, the Sunday walks, between Bolton and Ringley, Little Hulton and Egerton were discontinued and the Bolton to West Houghton walk was shortened. The remaining walks still had Sunday

deliveries in 1849." (Information: J. Moore and G.A. North, see note 27).

- (39) "A vol: of Mémoires of the French Institute" : The French Institute or L'Académie Française, was "fondée en 1635 par Richelieu, pour fixer et polir la langue: elle se compose de quarante membres et publie un dictionnaire...", M.N. Bouillet: Dictionnaire Universel D'Histoire et de Géographie, Paris, (1884), i, p. 9-10.

Harriet's "Mémoires" would have been a volume of published accounts of transactions of the Institute, or papers on its activities. In describing Harriet's library at 'the Knoll', Mrs Chapman observed, "the Mémoires of the French Institute were a present from Ampère," ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 383).

- (40) "M. Ampère" : This is not a reference to Andre-Marie Ampère, French physician, chemist and scientific writer, (1775-1836), who discovered some important principles in electricity and magnetism, because he was dead in 1849.

The reference is almost certainly to his son, Jean Jacques Antoine Ampère, (1800-1864), essayist, historian, and author of Histoire Romaine à Rome, (1862-1864). He was a friend of Mary Clarke, fashionable literary hostess in Paris in the 1830's and 40's, and a friend of Florence Nightingale, (herself of course a friend of Harriet Martineau), Cecil Woodham-Smith: Florence Nightingale, (1950), pp. 26 and 65.

- (41) "The Memnon at Thebes" : Thebes was "the Greek name of a city of Upper Egypt.. It became the capital at the time of the 12th dynasty, c. 2000 B.B., supplanting Memphis, and attained a great splendour," Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, ed. Sir Paul Harvey, (1951), pp. 424-425.

The Memnon was "a colossal statue near Egyptian Thebes ... representing King Amenorthis of the 18th dynasty... The musical sound which, before the statue's partial destruction by an

earthquake, it gave forth when struck by the rays of the morning sun, was regarded as Memnon's greeting to his mother, the Dawn," (ibid. p. 265)

Harriet visited Egyptian Thebes on her Eastern tour of 1846-7, Eastern Life, (1848), i, p. 284, and she visited the celebrated Memnon at Thebes, observing: "He who is popularly called the Memnon, is sadly shattered," (ibid., pp. 289-290).

(42) "My Eastern life'.. lately published" : Eastern Life, present and past, was published in London in three volumes in 1848.

(43) "My maid" : The unnamed maid could be Jane Arrowsmith, the 'apocalyptic housemaid' who later emigrated to Australia, or Martha, who later married the master of the Bristol Ragged Schools. Another possibility is Margaret, the maid who served Harriet during the sick-room period.

Mrs. F.F. Miller, (pp. 140-142) discusses at length Harriet's various maids, Jane, Martha, Caroline, (who served Harriet for twenty years and died in her service), and Mary Anne, (who served her eleven years). Mrs. Miller says that Harriet aimed to obtain "girls of somewhat superior order", and praises Harriet's benevolent treatment of her servants, (p. 141).

There is a section concerning Harriet's servants and household, including letters to and from Martha and Caroline, in the 'Memorials', Autobiography, ii, pp. 395-400.

Winifred Gérin says that Harriet "was deeply concerned for the welfare of others, adopting rather than employing the young village girls she engaged to serve her. Their education, happiness, and health were her active concern," Charlotte Brontë: The Evolution of Genius, (1967), p. 457.

Susanna Winkworth wrote of Harriet: "Her servants, who mostly lived with her for many years, adored her," Memorials of Two Sisters, ed. M.J. Shaen, (1908), p. 17.

(44) Prince Albert, (1819-1861), "said at a Palace party that medical men were conducting themselves improperly in refusing to investigate the facts of mesmerism," (R. K. Webb, p. 231).

(45) "The Witch-hanging in Salem" : The famous case of witchcraft at Salem Massachusetts, in 1692, was a notorious example of mass-hysteria, prejudice and ignorance:

The principal outbreak of persecution took place in 1692, when an epidemic disease resembling epilepsy spread through Danvers (part of Salem). Discouraged by the inability of physicians to control this disease, and encouraged by sermons from such clergymen as Cotton Mather, the belief was soon widespread that evil spirits in the form of witches were able to afflict the people at large. During this prevalence of the delusion ... 19 persons were hanged; one ... was pressed to death; 55 were frightened or tortured into confessions of guilt; 150 were imprisoned; and more than 200 were named as deserving arrest... When the governor's wife, some near relations of Cotton Mather, and the sons of ex-governor Broadstreet became objects of suspicion, the spell began to break..." James D. Hart: The Oxford Companion to American Literature, N. York, (1965), pp. 737-738.

Fuller accounts are given by Russell Hope Robbins, The Encyclopoedia of Witchcraft and Demonology, (1959), pp. 429-448, and by Chadwick Hansen in Witchcraft at Salem, (1970); contemporary accounts of the case appeared in Annals of Witchcraft in New England, first published Boston, (1859), 1969, pp. 187-208. The Salem witchcraft case inspired Arthur Miller's The Crucible, (1953).

Harriet visited Salem while on her American tour of 1834-5. Una Pope-Hennessy notes, however, that Harriet was more interested in Salem as a major maritime port than as an old centre of witchcraft. (Three Englishwomen in America, (1929), p. 281). Nevertheless Harriet was deeply interested in witchcraft. She reviewed an American book on the subject for The Edinburgh Review, Vol. 128, July 1868, pp. 41-47. Mrs. Wheatley observes: "it was truly a terrible tale of hanging, burning and persecution, and Harriet made the most of it," (V. Wheatley, p. 382). In addition, Harriet wrote two essays, 'Demonology and Witchcraft', and 'On Witchcraft', Miscellanies, Boston, (1836), 1, pp. 87-118, 387-402. The latter especially concerned the

Salem case.

The subject of witchcraft was frequently raised in considerations of Mesmerism; Jane Welsh Carlyle thought that Harriet's mesmerist Mrs. Wynard would certainly have been burnt as a witch in earlier times, Letters and Memorials, ed. J.A. Froude, (1883), ii, p. 25; the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend said that a woman who was operated on under Mesmerism later denounced it as "witchcraft", Mesmerism Proved True, (1854), p. 118; Harriet described how her somnambule, Jane Arrowsmith, related in mesmeric trance the story of a Tynemouth woman who cured a monk's lameness with cataplasms and was subsequently denounced by him as a witch, Letters on Mesmerism, (1845), pp. 33-34. Harriet herself rejected the Pope and the Church as "two old witches on broomsticks", Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), p. 250, and she was suspected by one elderly patient of performing mesmeric cures through the Devil, Autobiography, i, p. 515.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote to Mrs. Martin in Jan. 1845 that, with regard to the 'temptations' of Mesmerism, she "shrank nearly as much from these 'temptations' as from Lord Bacon's stew of infant children for the purposes of witchcraft." Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ed. F.G. Kenyon, (1897), i, p. 238. She also told Mr. Chorley on April 28th, 1845 that she was horrified by the thought of sending a lock of hair to a Parisian mesmerist for him to have a clairvoyant vision of her, and she exclaimed, "Did you ever, since the days of the witches, hear a more ghastly proposition?" Letters of E.B. Browning, i, p. 258.

Coleridge observed: "In many respects the voluntary confessions of Witches would lead one to suppose that an empirical Animal Magnetism was in play..." Inquiring Spirit, a new presentation of Coleridge from his published and unpublished prose writings, ed. Kathleen Coburn, (1951), p. 56.

Finally, in A Strange Story, Bulwer Lytton's character Dr. Fenwick observes:

Mesmerism could cure nobody; credulity could cure many. There was the well known story of the old woman tried as a witch; she cured agues by a charm... and was ready to endure gibbet or stake for the truth of her talisman; more than a mesmerist would for the truth of his passes, All the Year Round, Vol. 6, Oct. 26, 1861, p. 100.

- (46) "Commerce with the spirits of the dead" : A reference to the contemporary 'craze' in spiritualism following the emergence of the phenomenon of spirit-rappings in America in 1848 at the Fox home, Hydesville, near Rochester, New York, where two uneducated little girls, Katie and Maggie Fox, established a means of communication with spirits through knockings or rappings (Rev. Frederik G. Lee: Glimpses of the Supernatural, (1875), ii, pp. 141-143).

Joseph Crehan notes that modern spiritualism dates from this episode. (Spiritualism, (1967), p. 12). Soon after the original manifestation of the phenomenon, the rappings and table-movements were produced through other mediums as well, and the enthusiasm for inducing the spirits to communicate through them spread.

It is interesting to note that, whereas Elizabeth Barrett Browning's scepticism towards Mesmerism increased, (Chapter 3), she firmly believed in Spiritualism; Harriet, on the other hand, believed totally in Mesmerism, while frequently condemning spiritualism, (e.g. in the National Anti-Slavery Standard, New York, May 29th, 1860).

She wrote too:

To think what the God of the spiritualist is! and to remember the admission of the best of that class, that God is a projection of their own ideal faculty, recognizable only through that class of faculties, and by no means through any external evidence! Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, (1851), p. 217.

Other condemnatory discussions of Spiritualism appeared in the Autobiography, i, 516, (on spiritualist circles, 1846), and ii, p. 531, (in a letter to Mary Carpenter dated 17th, 1866).

In view of Harriet's clear hostility towards Spiritualism, it is difficult to ascribe her comments to James Payn to anything but self-contradiction on her part, or misunderstanding on his. Payn

observed: "Her belief in spiritualism was, indeed a severe trial to me ... 'I believe in spiritualism', she used to say, 'but not in the Spirits'," Some Literary Recollections, (1884), p. 106.

- (47) Interestingly, Harriet's defence of Mesmerism is no less exclusive, assertive in tone and subjective than the defences of spiritualists of their own practices, which she has just condemned. J. Crehan quotes Conan Doyle's and J. Arthur Findlay's claims for spiritualism which are very similar to Harriet's claims for Mesmerism, here.

(Spiritualism, (1967), p. 12)

The Stories as Didactic Fiction

The stories are entitled "Two True Stories about Clairvoyance," implying that the events related in them are not fictional but completely 'true'.

However, on closer examination it is my belief that they are in fact fictional - probably based on factual events - or that they are at least 'written up' from incidents that did actually occur. Several aspects of the stories imply the validity of such a conclusion :-

In the First Story

- 1) In the biographies, Harriet's own Autobiography, and, as we have seen, in the letters of her friends and acquaintances, there is a great deal of reference to Jane Arrowsmith, the 'apocalyptic housemaid'. Harriet's mesmeric experiments with her are comparatively well-documented, especially in Letters on Mesmerism, (1845). However, there are no similar references to 'Emma of Bolton' whatsoever, which may suggest that she had no existence outside the world of the two stories. The absence of reference would be strange if she were a real person, both in view of Harriet's apparently close association with her, and because we find references to other young girls connected with Mesmerism who had only a very indirect association with Harriet, e.g. Ann Vials, Letters on Mesmerism, p. 6, Autobiography, i, p. 473. Even a minor figure, Jane Ann of Tynemouth, (not Jane Arrowsmith), a reformed prostitute mesmerised by Mrs. Wynard for epilepsy, who later became a devout Methodist, (Autobiography, i, pp. 479-480) - Even a minor figure such as she receives a 'coverage' which 'Emma of Bolton' does not.

Moreover, although in the stories Harriet appears to be on exceptionally close terms with the 'Duckinfield Darbishires', intimate enough for her to conduct psychic experiments with two members of the family, these 'friends' are not referred to in the Autobiography, (not even in the relevant period, 1849: ii, pp. 18-23), or any of the biographies, letters or other works

of Harriet's; neither are they referred to in county or family histories, as far as I have been able to ascertain. Could they, too, therefore, be as 'fictional' as 'Emma of Bolton'? Or may they be personae used by Harriet to clothe the identities of real individuals? If so, the 'truth' of the incidents is relative indeed; at least, it requires qualification. But why are Mr. Atkinson, his father, Lord Elgin, Monsieur Ampère - even Prince Albert himself - not similarly clothed in pseudonyms?

- 11) Certain elements in the stories seem to be anticipated in earlier works such as the stolen bank-notes and the suspected clerk. This situation bears a close similarity, as was pointed out in note 8, to one of the Illustrations of Political Economy. Could some memory of this fiscal crime have remained in Harriet's consciousness, re-manifested here, in a story on clairvoyance?

- 111) "Mrs D's question related to some missing property (not, I think, her own, but a friend's).."

If this property were so indirectly related to both Mrs. Darbishire and Harriet, why can its nature and the circumstances of its loss not be described in greater detail? Reasons of, say, propriety or delicacy would appear absurd in view of the very indirect relation of the characters involved to it. It is possible that greater detail would not necessarily be helpful to the story, but again, would one not be more inclined to grant the story greater credibility and factuality if the events were described as fully and in as much detail as possible? It seems likely that Harriet made this reference casually, attempting to heighten credibility by the mention of even so minor a detail, while avoiding lengthening her stories by claiming that she has had to censor the details.

- 1v) Emma is mesmerised in the sitting-room, and Mr. Haddock "went out and came in, two or three times, as business called him."

Can we really believe that Harriet would conduct delicate psychic experiments with Haddock coming in and out of the room? Surely privacy

would be essential for the subject's concentration to be held and the mesmeric state effected.

Was Haddock interested in observing the experiment - especially since it concerned his own servant, who had recently been of sensational assistance in the solving of a suspected crime? If Haddock were interested, he should have closed the shop and ensured absolute seclusion and quiet during the experiment. Was there any need for him to keep coming in and out of the sitting-room? Was his store of merchandise not situated near the shop itself, (this is presumably the reason for his entrances and exits?) If not, surely there would be a risk of theft during his frequent and necessary absences from the shop?

There may be a simply explanation for Haddock's frequent appearances, in that Harriet is using the down-to-earth shopkeeper merely as a witness of the experiments, further sustaining the 'truth' of her story.

- v) Apparently Emma was mesmerised by Harriet after Mrs. Darbshire had asked her question. This is quite incredible: are we to believe that Mrs. Darbshire's business was conducted without Emma being mesmerised first? If so, how could Emma possibly be expected to make clairvoyant pronouncements about Mrs. Darbshire's friend's missing property?
- iv) Emma says that there is another cast "below in the shop". However, we have hitherto been led to understand that she is in the sitting-room, through from the shop - not upstairs. We are not told that the visitors went upstairs to the sitting-room, or that Mr. Haddock has to climb up and down a staircase every time business calls him. If he does have to do this, it increases the risk of theft from the shop during his absences, which would be made even longer by the necessity of ascending and descending a staircase. It seems that Harriet has made an oversight regarding the geography of Haddock's shop.

The Second Story

- i) Mr. C. Darbshire "had therefore never referred at all to me and my visit, and did not know how far the girl was conscious of it."

Darbshire should have known that Emma could be expected to be fully

conscious of Harriet's visit in the First Story. After all, Emma had met Harriet on that occasion, and had seen her, before she had been mesmerised by her. She had sat in Harriet's presence long before the mesmerisation for Mrs. Darbshire to discuss her business at length with Emma. Being mesmerised did not imply that one forgot all previous experience encountered prior to the mesmerisation.

It seems that, again, Harriet is attempting to enhance the credibility of her story as briefly as possible: by casting doubts on Emma's recollection of the previous session with Harriet, she is aiming to render impossible Emma's visions of "the lady" in this Second Story, as being fabricated by the girl consciously (and subtly) associating Darbshire with "the lady". However, we remain unconvinced that Emma could have had no knowledge of Harriet's previous visit.

- ii) "he knew nothing about my position ... whether I lived in lodgings, or how or where, he was entirely ignorant.."

This, again, is highly questionable. Harriet had sent him a letter containing her instructions with regard to Emma; presumably, as is customary, her address headed this letter. Darbshire could therefore have checked up on the address, and he had a full week in which to find out about Harriet's domestic arrangements - for instance, surreptitiously from Mrs. Darbshire.

Apart from this, is it really conceivable that Darbshire (whom, Harriet tells us, she had met once before), would not know where and how the famous Harriet Martineau, his brother and sister-in-law's friend, lived? Is it conceivable that he would be totally unable to discover facts about her and her way of life? After all, she is so well known that she instructs Darbshire not to mention her name in front of Haddock and Emma.

- iii) "it would have made no difference in the essential points of the story".

This, again, is quite unfounded. No loop-holes should be left in experiments of this kind. To the sceptical reader, it would make a

difference if Darbishire had known Harriet's house. If nothing else it would lessen the possibility of authenticity.

- iv) The alteration of the maid "looking" to "coming in" could be due to a mistake at first made in the writing down of the story. However, Harriet is supposed, is she not, to be copying the details from Darbishire's letter sent from the counting-house?

Moreover, as the maid actually entered the room, there is an even stronger possibility that Harriet could have seen her in the mirror.

Given that these so-called 'true' stories possess elements that may suggest a fictional framework, why should Harriet attempt to deceive the reader into believing that they are in fact true?

Elsewhere she attaches great importance to truth and to holding fast to truth. She disapproved of people like George Eliot who concealed themselves behind pseudonyms,(3), and even within the context of criticism, she required fiction to reflect Reality very closely indeed. Her criticism of Charlotte Brontë's Villette, for instance, was based on the fact that, for her, Charlotte had not adhered closely enough in the novel to the reality of life as it is. In her review of Villette, Harriet said of the novel's pre-occupation with agonizing the reader's emotions, (as she saw it):

.. we ourselves have felt inclined to rebel against the pain, and... are disposed to deny its necessity and truth.(4).
An atmosphere of pain hangs about the whole, forbidding that repose which we hold to be essential to the true presentment of any large portion of life and experience, (pp. 399-400).

Of the novel's theme of love, and the importance of love to women, she commented: "It is not thus in real life," (p. 400).

What, therefore, could be Harriet's motive in describing her stories as 'true' when in fact they are not strictly so?

At this point in the analysis of the stories it would be profitable to consider Harriet's views of fiction.

In her Autobiography, when discussing her plan for Berkeley the Banker, she said:

The only thing to be done, therefore, is to derive the plot from actual life ... every perfect plot in fiction is taken bodily from real life. The best we know are so derived. Shakespeare's are so: Scott's one perfect plot ('The Bride of Lammermoor') is so; and if we could know where Boccaccio and other old narators got theirs, we should certainly find that they took them from their predecessors, or from the life before their eyes... My only resource therefore was taking suggestion from facts, witnessed by myself, or gathered in any way I could, (Autobiography, i, p. 180)

Winifred Gérin says of Harriet: "She was not a writer with a gift for creating plots and had to depend on personal experience and the reported experience of others." (5).

Harriet's whole attitude towards fiction appears to have been based on a concept of 'facts' which have in some way been 'fictionalised'. The notion applies to all of her creative work, including her two novels, Deerbrook, (1839), and The Hour and the Man, (1840).

She said of the time when she came to write Deerbrook: "My doctrine about plots in fiction has been given at sufficient length. It follows of course that I looked into real life for mine" (Autobiography, i, p. 411). Her source, she said, was Catherine Sedgwick's Old Maids, (from her Tales and Sketches, Philadelphia, 1835, pp. 108-116), which Harriet herself described as "a story from real life," (Autobiography, i, p. 411).

J.C. Nevill notes that in Deerbrook Harriet was "actuated by the curious belief that plots should be taken from real life ... she decided to write up the story ... of a friend of her family(6)... and the result was 'Deerbrook'," (J. C. Nevill, p. 71).

John Conington noted a similar quality of Deerbrook, in that the characters' speeches were derived from Harriet's own experience in real-life terms. He wrote: "I find a similar remark in 'Deerbrook', where a character, into whose mouth Miss Martineau evidently puts many of her own thoughts, says..." (7).

Mrs. Miller sees the failure of Deerbrook, on the other hand, in its "bondage to (supposed) fact," (F.F. Miller, p. 113).

With regard to her other novel, The Hour and the Man, Harriet discussed the story of Toussaint L'Ouverture(8), which was the source for her novel, saying: "I was completely carried away by the article on St. Domingo in the Quarterly Review, volume XXI," (Autobiography, i, p. 412).

J. C. Nevill considers that this second novel provided Harriet with "an excellent opportunity for combining truth with fiction," (J.C. Nevill p. 71), and he describes the novel as "a free translation of actual history," (pp. 75-76). R.K. Webb states that the work was "concerned to demonstrate a truth ... the great potential of the Negro," (R.K. Webb, p. 191). Robert Lee Wolff notes that in The Hour and the Man, Harriet is "thinly concealing behind the Haitian façade her own passionate commitment to the abolition of slavery in America."(9).

These ideas of fictionalising facts, with the didactic aim of teaching in mind are reflected throughout Harriet's writings. Mrs. Miller says: "It is obvious at once that her writings are all designed to teach," (F.F. Miller, p. 65). Of Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development, Mrs. Miller observes, "the sole motive ... was the same that impelled her to do all her work - the desire to teach that which she believed to be true," (F.F. Miller, p. 160).

R.K. Webb says that, "like Miss Edgeworth she wrote tales to teach," and, calling her an "incurable teacher," he adds that "nothing makes this clearer than her views on literature... Everything she wrote ... fell into the didactic pattern and served a particular cause," (R.K. Webb, pp. 37-38, 40). Harriet, he continues, desired to be "a national instructor ... that helped her to the remarkable accomplishment that launched her career on the national scene: the 'Illustrations of Political Economy'." (R.K. Webb, p. 99).

Mrs. Wheatley comments that these Illustrations reveal in Harriet "the novelist manqué, the novelist impaired, even blasted, by the passionate urge for propaganda and reform," (V. Wheatley, p. 96), while R.K. Webb discusses the 'factual' source of each fictional projection, each Illustration, (R.K. Webb, pp. 114-118); he even sees her children's series, The Playfellow, (1841), as "intended to be highly instructive," (R.K. Webb, p. 205).

Much has already been said and written of Harriet's work as a didactic writer.(10). It is clear from what she said of her literary intentions in her Autobiography, and from what critical opinion has said of her as a writer, that, firstly, she believed in basing fiction firmly on factual experience, and, secondly, that she believed fiction was to be used to instruct, or to propagate some 'truth'.

I believe that both of these views are borne out in her treatment of factual sources, and her aim in advancing didactically the cause of Mesmerism in Two True Stories about Clairvoyance. Her approach, however, is complex: she is not concerned solely to move from particular and definite facts, fictionalising them but still providing a reasonably credible and convincing story. Her aim is to fictionalise general, 'factual' truths about Mesmerism, but by creating from these another set of 'facts' which she intends the reader to accept not simply as 'convincing stories', but as literal truth. In other words, she moves from a conviction that certain aspects of Mesmerism are 'true', and she introduces these aspects into fictional stories - but she tries to convince her readers of the truth of the 'aspects', by asserting the truth of the stories themselves. As we have seen, because of her inconsistencies, she fails in this aim.

It seems likely, then, that in the stories Harriet took real events from life and fictionalised them in order to distance them from their originals, while still attempting to assert that these were incidents which actually occurred.

Her aim, as has been intimated, was didactic. She wished to convince

the reader of what she herself believed to be true. This is how the assertion of the 'truth' of these fictional stories can be reconciled with a mind otherwise more or less consistently insistent upon absolute truth: if Harriet believed in the Ultimate Truth of Mesmerism, then her belief could have been strong enough to justify whatever means she may have had resort to - the use of fiction asserted as truth, or the fictionalisation of true events - in order to convey this Truth of Mesmerism to the reader, to secure the reader's acceptance of the cause.

Her other fiction, as we have seen, reveals this approach: Illustrations of Political Economy, and The Hour and the Man both illustrate the fictionalisations of 'causes' which Harriet utterly believed in. Above her concern for preserving truth in everyday matters, she had a concept of the Ultimate Truth of her beliefs - her beliefs in the necessity for slave-emancipation, in her economic theories, and, finally, her belief in the validity of mesmeric clairvoyance.

The stories explore five didactic arguments relating to Mesmerism. They assert, first, the truth of mesmeric clairvoyance; secondly, they condemn those who reject the 'facts' of mesmeric clairvoyance; thirdly, they advocate the careful handling of psychic gifts; fourthly, they condemn fraudulent mesmeric practice, and, finally, they suggest further investigation of the phenomenon.

Throughout this commentary, reference has been made to a likely source for the incidents related, existing in real-life terms. It seems possible that the actual events which Harriet bases her account on are derived from the episodes found in Letters on Mesmerism, relating to Jane Arrowsmith's clairvoyance.

There is a reason why Harriet should have repeated her material, fictionalising the events at Tynemouth which she had already described as

facts in Letters on Mesmerism, (1845). The reason is that Letters on Mesmerism were too explicitly didactic and, more important, the factual claims for the events related were later undermined. Jane was exposed, to the discredit of Harriet and of Mesmerism generally, and the Letters caused considerable controversy.

Not to be defeated in her resolution to effect her didactic aim and to preach mesmeric truth, however, Harriet may have decided to adopt a more subtle technique than the explicitly factual Letters on Mesmerism of 1845 which failed, by using fiction, and setting the events slightly later, in 1849 - after the immediate controversy surrounding Jane had died down. Critics could investigate the circumstances surrounding Jane's pronouncements, and expose them; this would not be possible in the case of Mr. Darbishire and 'Emma of Bolton', however, because the latter did not exist in the literal sense that Jane Arrowsmith did. Harriet still presents the facts as 'true', (and Mr. Atkinson is there with his casts, and she with her volume of 'Mémoires' from Monsieur Ampère, all as in real life), but if she were to be challenged on this point, she could always claim that her stories were as 'true' as any other first person fictional narration purports to be true. Moreover, it is significant that the actual events which Harriet chooses to describe in the stories are far less dramatic and sensational than events described in Letters on Mesmerism. In the stories we are concerned with low-keyed accounts of 'far-sight'; in the Letters we encountered the absurdity of Jane being induced to taste water as if it were sherry, (p. 36), of her imitating the sound of bagpipes, (p. 34), of her making complex medical pronouncements (pp. 22-23), and profound theological declarations, (p. 25).

There is no evidence that Harriet had any intention of publishing these stories, but neither is there any evidence to the contrary. It is my belief that this was her intention - to convey her message successfully

through the stories, where the Letters had failed, but for some reason she finally resolved not to publish them, perhaps because she lost interest in them, or more likely, because she decided not to resurrect the Jane Arrowsmith controversy again at the risk of damaging further the cause of Mesmerism.

As has been stated already, the contents of the stories and the Letters are different. The stories are less-sensational in their accounts of people being observed clairvoyantly, while the Letters involve dramatic escapes from shipwrecks.

However, there are similarities between the Letters and the stories. They contain similar arguments, (asserting the truth of the phenomenon, condemning ignorant rejection of the facts, advising careful handling of psychic gifts etc.); they contain similar elements, (both the stories and Letters have references to witchcraft, apothecaries etc.); similar situations, (in the Letters we have Jane, the landlady her aunt, Harriet Martineau, Mrs Arrowsmith, and an unsympathetic male investigator, p. 35; in the stories we have equivalent figures in Emma, Mrs. Darbshire, the narrator, Mr. Haddock, and Charles Darbshire, a sympathetic investigator).

To conclude, therefore, it seems likely that Harriet, aware of the failure of her advocacy of Mesmerism in the Letters, resolved to do better in the stories, and took certain elements, arguments and structural features of the Letters, retained them in the stories, but introduced into the latter incidents which may actually have occurred, or merely examples of clairvoyant 'far-sight', which were common. She still offers the stories as 'true' in order to strengthen her arguments in support of Mesmerism; but because the characters directly involved are in fact fictional, (apart from Atkinson, who is not directly involved in the experiments, and who was in any case sufficiently committed to the cause of Mesmerism to be quite prepared for ridicule or discredit), she avoids the dangers of loopholes and exposure ^{which} ~~as~~ she encountered - to her own misfortune and the detriment of Mesmerism - following the publication of the Letters.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

- (1) D.W. Evans: Catalogue of the Harriet Martineau Papers, the Library University of Birmingham, (1969), p. 70.
- (2) Edward Rea: A Study of Harriet Martineau, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, (1969), p. 192. This work is later referred to as 'E. Rea'.
- (3) Harriet wrote of George Eliot to Charles Holte Bracebridge:

One of the weaknesses I spoke of is a sentimentality with which I have no sympathy, but which is evidently increased by the sympathy of some of her friends. Hence the silly exchange of her baptismal name for that of 'Marian'. I know how that incident arose. It was an act worthy of a sentimental, thoughtless schoolgirl entirely unaware of the gravity of the act of assuming a false name. One friend calling her Mary Ann, and another, in a soft way, Mary Ann, she asked them whether she might not call herself 'Marian', which was so much prettier; and she was encouraged to do it - It was a pity; and calling herself 'Mrs Lewes' is more than a pity. These things tell against her, E. Rea, pp. 265-266, letter dated Nov. 21st, 1859, quoted and annotated from the Birmingham Collection, HM 83.

In 1843, when Anna Jameson wrote an article in The Athenaeum commenting on the Report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Women and Young People in Mines, (1842), she wrote under a male pseudonym. Apparently, Anna "was put in an embarrassing position ... by her masquerading as a male in this Athenaeum article." Both she and her friend, Lady Byron, "feared that their mutual friend, Harriet Martineau, would be annoyed at the deception," Clara Thomas: Love and Work Enough, the life of Anna Jameson, Toronto, (1967), p. 158.

However, as Edward Rea rightly notes, Harriet was not entirely consistent in her dislike of pseudonyms, for although she "objected in principle to the use of false names, whether in literature or in everyday use... She does not, however, seem to have objected to the Brontë pseudonyms," (E. Rea, p. 266).

In fact, Harriet herself used plenty of pseudonyms. Her early articles in the Monthly Repository appeared under the name 'Discipulus'; at nineteen she had a letter entitled 'Female Writers

on Practical Divinity' published in the journal, of which she said:
 "I took the letter V for my signature - I cannot at all remember why,"
 (Autobiography, i, p. 91).

Again, her Devotional Exercises, (1823), and Addresses with Prayers, (1826), were published as "By a Lady"; the Guide to Service series, ('The Maid of All Work', 'The Housemaid', 'the Lady's Maid', and 'The Dressmaker'), (1838), were all issued anonymously, and Life in the Sick Room, (1843), was published under the name of "an Invalid".

Finally, her own assumption in later life of the title 'Mrs Martineau' in preference to 'Miss' Martineau sounds just as 'silly' and as deceptive as George Eliot's pseudonyms and adopted names. Harriet's only justification in her own case was to say: "Wasn't there Mrs Hannah More and Mrs Edgeworth? I see there were reasons for it: I will be Mrs Harriet Martineau", 'Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 387.

- (4) Harriet's Review of Villette appeared in the Daily News, Feb. 3rd, 1853.

It was reproduced exactly by Mrs Wheatley, pp. 399-401, and all the quotations in the text are from this version, the first, p. 399.

- (5) Winifred Gérin: Charlotte Brontë, the Evolution of Genius, (1967), p. 409.
- (6) J.C. Nevill must mean that the story was by a friend of the family, (and, indeed, Catherine Sedgwick was a friend of Harriet's), not that the novel was about a friend.
- (7) Miscellaneous Writings of John Conington, ed. J.A. Symonds, (1872), i, 'Mémor', p. ⁱⁱⁱ ~~iii~~, in a letter to C. Cholmeley Puller, written from Boston on Aug. 23rd, 1858.
- (8) Toussaint L'Ouverture, (1743-1803): Haitian Negro general and liberator, of slave parentage. He led the insurrection of slaves on Haiti

during the French Revolutionary period, leading the French Republicans and forcing the British to evacuate the island in 1798. He resisted Napoleon's attempts to re-impose slavery, was defeated and imprisoned in France, where he died.

- (9) Robert Lee Wolff: 'Present uses for the Past', Times Literary Supplement, Dec. 13th, 1974, p. 1404.
- (10) For example, Mary R. Andersen: Harriet Martineau, a representative didactic writer of the 19th century, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pittsburgh, (1932).

CHAPTER SEVEN : MESMERISM, ITS INTEREST TO CONTEMPORARY FIGURES

OF NOTE

Reference has already been made to a number of people who became aware of Mesmerism through Harriet Martineau, or who commented on it and its effect on her writings, because of her case. Others became actively involved in the phenomenon through her. Among these have been noted Professor Gregory, Archbishop Whately, the Brownings, Lord Morpeth, the Wordsworths, Macaulay, the Winkworth sisters, Charlotte Brontë, the Carlyles, Anna Jameson, Margaret Fuller, Macready, Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, James Payn, Lady Eastlake, the Arnolds, George Eliot, Fanny Kemble, Mary Howitt, Mary Russell Mitford, Charles Knight, Sara Hennell, and so on.

However, apart from these there were many other notable figures of the 19th century who were either interested in, or personally involved in Mesmerism. Summarising briefly and simplistically, it seems that the rise of Mesmerism in the 18th century was due to the great importance which was attached to all forms of scientific discovery and investigation. The continuing interest which Mesmerism attracted during the 19th century may also be accounted for by historic reasons. There was a general interest in occult subjects such as Mesmerism and Spiritualism - especially in the more mysterious aspects of Mesmerism, the clairvoyance, the cures etc. - at a time when orthodox religious faith was being shaken by scientific discovery, the revelations of Biblical criticism, etc. Therefore the more sensationally supernatural became for many a refuge from an increasingly materialistic society which appeared to be losing traditional faith while finding nothing adequate to replace it. In a world of spreading industrialisation, a world which was finding traditional Christian explanations less easy to accept in view of new discoveries, many, (perhaps Harriet Martineau among them), lost their religious faith and turned to the fascinating mysteries of the occult. Others saw their faith confirmed

or renewed by the 'proofs' of supernatural theories which the occult seemed to afford, the Christian mesmerists among them. Still others saw in hitherto uninvestigated fields, further discoveries which, combined with others already being made, would lead on to enlightenment and human advancement.

These reasons may account for the interest in Mesmerism shown by highly intelligent people. It needs to be repeated, however, that those intellectuals who saw 'truth' in Mesmerism were not entirely mistaken or deluded: the hypnotic elements in the phenomenon were there to be found, and would of course emerge as the science of Hypnotism, transcending the mesmeric nonsense that temporarily obscured them. Therefore one cannot dismiss the serious interest and belief in Mesmerism of intelligent people like Dickens, Coleridge or Clough, in terms of subjective, obsessive eccentricity, or delusion based on the scientific limitations of the age in which these people lived.

Coleridge (1772-1834) adopted a cautious approach to Mesmerism. The Rev. George Sandby claimed him as a definite believer in Mesmerism(1), but his belief certainly requires qualification. As Kathleen Coburn says of Coleridge's attitude towards the ancient mysteries, oracles, withcraft, the Cabala and animal magnetism, "all these, if we knew enough, would yield, he thinks, to a natural explanation."(2).

Certainly Coleridge was appalled by the idea that Mesmerism should be rejected without fair investigation. He wrote in July 1817: "Whence the contemptuous rejection of animal magnetism before and without examination?"(3). He proceeded to observe: "in the case of Animal Magnetism there is no question concerning a Theory - the whole and sole demand is, to examine ... a series of Facts," (Inquiring Spirit, p. 46). Coleridge advocated a simple test for proving the truth of the phenomenon: "There is but one demand made - Viz. Try it yourself," (Inquiring Spirit, p. 48). Proceeding to a discussion of mesmeric techniques, Coleridge concluded: "For myself, I shall even say - I will try it when I have the opportunity

myself - I will endeavour to see it tried by others, when I can - and till then I will be neutral," (Inquiring Spirit, p. 50),

Not long after this, he read a work on the subject - Dr. C.A.F. Kluge's Versuch einer Darstellung des animalischen Magnetismus, Berlin, (1815), and his expression of belief in the phenomenon became stronger, though he remained cautious about asserting a reason for it:

I can yet find nothing in the cases collected by Dr. Kluge that requires any other conclusion but this - that under certain conditions one human Being may so act on the body as well as on the mind of another - as to produce a morbid sleep, from which the Brain awakes, while the organs of sense remain in stupor ... Thus ... the instrument thro' which the Magnetiser operates, is the only mystery; and on this neither Kluge nor any of his Predecessors have thrown a ray of light, (Inquiring Spirit, p. 51).

On December 28th, 1818, Coleridge delivered a lecture in which, again, he appears to have asserted that the 'truth' of Mesmerism could not be doubted, although this truth in no way depended upon Mesmer having been honest and scrupulous. Mesmer apart, the validity of his theories lay in that the facts spoke for themselves:

If it were possible for a man of sense to believe Mesmer, the supposed discoverer of Animal Magnetism, one tittle beyond what his assertions have been attested and accredited ... that though it is to the stupor of all physiology, though contradicted by all our theoretical opinions before, yet the facts are as undeniable as they are surprising, (Philosophical Lectures, p. 104, Lecture II).

Coleridge's interest in Mesmerism persisted. He wrote an article on Animal Magnetism that is still in manuscript form in the British Museum, (Philosophical Lectures, p. 424). H.N. Coleridge noted that, when Coleridge read Southey's Life of Wesley, (1820), he heavily annotated his edition; when he came to Southey's description of 'far-sight' among Methodists, Coleridge commented:

The coincidence throughout of all these Methodist cases with those of the Magnetists make one wish a solution that would apply to all. Now this sense or appearance of a sense of the distant, both in time and space, in common to almost all the magnetic patients in Denmark, Germany, France, and North Italy ... And among the Magnetisers and Attesters are to be found names of men, whose competence in respect of integrity and incapability of intentional falsehood is fully equal to Wesley's... (4)

Coleridge seems never to have resolved the difficulty of accounting for the occurrence of indisputable mesmeric phenomena. He observed:

Nine years has the subject of zoo magnetism been before me. I have traced it historically ... have never neglected an opportunity of questioning eye-witnesses ... and I remain where I was, and where the first perusal of Kluge's work had left me, without having advanced an inch backward or forward, (Table Talk, p. 84).

Finally, on April 30th, 1830 - four years before his death - the enigma of Mesmerism was still troubling him, and he observed: "My mind is in a state of philosophical doubt as to animal magnetism," (Table Talk, p. 83).

Henry Crabb Robinson, (1775-1867), the diarist, was a great believer in Mesmerism. Edith Morley cites this as one of the areas of disagreement between himself and Wordsworth, whose scepticism towards Mesmerism has already been discussed in relation to Harriet's cure:

There were many and very dissimilar subjects on which Wordsworth and Crabb Robinson did not see eye to eye ... Crabb Robinson's curiosity and desire for information led him naturally to discussion and to investigation of the unfamiliar. Wordsworth distinctly revolted against the unknown; Robinson was attracted to it. The subject of 'animal magnetism' or 'mesmerism' is a case in point. (5).

She continues: "Mesmerism or 'animal magnetism' ... was ... a subject of acute interest to Crabb Robinson and his acquaintances, some of whom, for example the Wordsworths, objected to it, as to spiritualism, on religious grounds," (E. Morley, p. 128).

Harriet's cure deeply impressed Crabb Robinson. She told him that she would employ the whole weight of her intellect and character in testifying to the truth of Mesmerism, as soon as the evidence was complete, (R.K. Webb, p. 230, quoting from a letter of Oct. 6th, 1844, in Dr. Williams' library, London). However, one doctor, seizing, (as did so many others), on the extraordinary story of Harriet's maid being induced, under Mesmerism, to taste water as if it were brandy, told the enthusiastic Robinson that "if water had the effect of brandy on Miss Martineau because the mesmerizer willed it, he wished she would try brandy while the mesmerizer willed it to be water," (R.K. Webb, p. 232).

Two men who testified to seeing the beneficial effects of Mesmerism were Henry Hallam, (1777-1859), the historian, (father of Tennyson's friend Arthur Hallam, 1811-1833, in memory of whom Tennyson wrote In Memoriam, 1850), and Samuel Rogers, (1763-1855), the poet. As Harriet Martineau described, they saw some mesmeric cures effected in Paris, and on returning to England stated what they had seen. They were ridiculed, however, and did not make further witness to their experience. Hallam, however, still convinced, wrote to Harriet to say that many people regarded Mesmerism as established beyond dispute, (Autobiography, i, pp. 486-487).

The Rev. John Mitford, (1781-1859), friend of Samuel Rogers and Charles Lamb, poet, periodical contributor, editor of Gray and author of Miscellaneous Poems, (1858), was originally a sceptic regarding Mesmerism, but became "a firm believer," (Sandby, p. 132).

Shelley, (1792-1822) was interested in all forms of occultism and the supernatural. Neville Rogers notes: "It was on the 18th August, 1816 that the Shelley who 'sought for ghosts' as a boy and demons as a man took part in a long conversation about supernatural matters with Mary, 'Monk' Lewis, Byron, and Polidori." (6). These conversations were recorded by Shelley, in Mary's journal (7), and resulted in the evolution of her novel Frankenstein, (1818).

Shelley was fully aware of Mesmerism and of the claims made by mesmerists regarding the mesmeric explanation of Christian miracles. He wrote in about 1814: "They may have been produced by a peculiar agency of supernatural ^tingelligences, analagous to what we read of animal magnetism ..." (8).

Shelley's poem The Magnetic Lady, which, along with other literary uses of Mesmerism, will be discussed in the following chapter, was inspired by his frustrated attraction to Jane Williams, wife of his friend Edward Ellerker Williams, (1793-1822), towards the end of Shelley's life.

Neville Rogers says of the relationship: "Now, in 1822 ..., he was driven to seek comfort in Jane's gifts of 'animal magnetism'. Unfortunately the hypnotic cure for his curious mental condition was only a temporary one," (Rogers, p. 287).

This is not to suggest that Jane Williams literally practised Mesmerism on Shelley, but that the power of her personality, inducing a passionate response in the poet, inspired him to write of Mesmerism in the context of a love-situation, in that poem.

The Arnold family came into contact with Mesmerism because they were near neighbours of Harriet Martineau's in Westmorland. However, the Arnolds' interest in Mesmerism pre-dated Harriet's cure: Dr Arnold, (1795-1842), expressed his belief in mesmeric phenomena before that event. He wrote: "... there is room for infinite discoveries, to say nothing of the wonderful phenomena of animal magnetism", and, "I shall like to hear anything fresh about animal magnetism which has already excited my curiosity." (9).

Again, in his Sermons he said: "In our own times the phenomena of animal magnetism have lately received an attestation which, in my judgement, establishes the facts beyond question," and:

I am inclinedⁱⁿ to think there exists a lurking fear of these phenomena ~~(of Mesmerism)~~, as if they might shake our faith in true miracles - and, therefore, men are inclined to disbelieve them, in spite of testimony; a habit far more unreasonable, and far more dangerous, to our Christian faith, than any belief in the facts of Mesmerism. (10).

It is quite clear, moreover, that Dr. Arnold was 'claimed' as one of their number by the mesmerists themselves. (11).

When Harriet Martineau went to live at Ambleside, the Arnolds who lived at nearby Fox How, became her neighbours. Reference has previously been made, (Chapter 3), to Mrs. Arnold's and Mary Arnold's attendance at some of Harriet's mesmeric sessions with Jane Arrowsmith. These sessions were conducted by Harriet's own mesmerist, Mrs. Wynard, who moved with

her from Tynemouth. Mrs. Arnold's later hostility towards Harriet developed following the publication of Letters on the Laws of Man's Nature and Development.

Matthew Arnold's attitude towards Harriet seems to have been ambiguous. He laughed about her "cow-keeping miracles", (see Chapter 4), and his poem Haworth Churchyard, (April 1855), a tribute to Harriet and Charlotte Brontë, is somewhat guarded in its praise of the former. Mrs. Chapman elatedly incorporated the entire poem in her 'Memorials', (Autobiography, ii, pp. 471-473), but the following lines are highly cautious and suggest that Harriet lacked the humility which otherwise could have endeared her to more admirers:

Hail to the spirit which dared
Trust its own thoughts, before yet
Echoed her back by the crowd!
Hail to the courage which gave
Voice to its creed, ere the creed
Won consecration from time! (12).

As Edward Rea says of Arnold's attitude towards Harriet, it "is not as clear as that of the rest of the family at Fox How. His estimate of her varied considerably and seems to have changed with no apparent reason..." Arnold admired her "qualities of steadfastness, originality and and love of truth," but, Rea observes, "he disliked her, despite his assertions of how much he admired her character." (13).

However, despite the fluctuations in the Arnolds' enthusiasm for Harriet, there is evidence to suggest that she was to have undertaken the mesmerizing of young Tom Arnold to cure him of a stammer. (14).

Thomas Carlyle, (1795-1881), and his wife Jane Welsh Carlyle, (1801-1866), were irritated by Harriet Martineau's rejection of a state pension, her attempt to suppress the publication of any of her letters, and, finally, her atheism. All these factors led to the alienation of the Carlyles. Mesmerism was another sphere in which Carlyle could not concur with Harriet's

views, and his wife's scornful rejection of Jane Arrowsmith was noted in Chapter 3.

However, both Carlyle and Jane were interested in Mesmerism and attended a session together. Jane Carlyle's amusing account of the affair, in a letter to her uncle, John Welsh, reveals that, though dismissive of Harriet's excesses, she did not doubt that the phenomena themselves actually occurred: "I have just been reading Harriet Martineau's outpourings in the 'Athenaeum'..." She continued of Mesmerism that, "the less one has to do with it, the better; and that it is all one family with witchcraft, demonical possession..." She added, however, that, "to deny that there is such a thing as animal magnetism and that it actually does produce many of the phenomena here recorded, is idle..." She continued, "I perfectly believe, then, in the power of magnetism to throw people into all sorts of unnatural states of body..."

She described the mesmerization of a Miss Bölte one evening at a Mrs. Butler's,

by a distinguished magnetizer, who could not sound his h's... In a quarter of an hour, by gazing with his dark animal eyes into hers, and simply holding one of her hands, while his other rested on her head, he had made her into the image of death; no marble was ever colder, paler, or more motionless...

Then he played cantrips with her arm and leg and left them stretched out for an hour in an attitude which no awake person could have preserved for three minutes. I touched them, and they felt horrid - stiff as iron ... The man, who regarded Carlyle and me as Philistines, said 'Now are you convinced?' 'Yes,' said Carlyle, 'there is no possibility of doubting that you have stiffened all poor little Miss Bölte into something very awful'.

Jane then dared the mesmerist to mesmerize her, and he took up the challenge. She continued: "I looked him defiantly in the face, as much as to say, 'You must learn to sound your h's, sir, before you can produce any effect on a woman like me!'" She felt his mesmeric power, and resisted, however, although its very existence,:

destroyed... my theory of the need of a consenting will... Of the clairvoyance I have witnessed nothing;... When my insane friend was in this house he said many things on the strength of his insanity which in a mesmerised person would have been quoted as miracles of clairvoyance.(15).

The Rev. Chauncy (or Chauncey) Hare Townshend, (1798-1868), poet, traveller, and collector of precious stones, was one of the most thorough investigators and a profound believer in Mesmerism. He was a friend of Southey, Dickens, Thackeray and Dr. John Elliotson, and as a Christian stressed that the phenomenon was a Divine gift. He was also unusual among the later mesmerists for his belief in the existence of the 'magnetic fluid' of Mesmer. His contributions to the literature of Mesmerism, apart from various articles in The Zoist, (16), included Facts in Mesmerism, (1844), Mesmerism Proved True, (1854), and a supplement to Lang's Animal Magnetism or Mesmerism, (1844) entitled New Facts in Mesmerism, subsequently incorporated into later editions of Facts in Mesmerism. The latter work, dedicated to Dr. Elliotson, contained extensive accounts of Townshend's mesmeric experiments in Antwerp and Cambridge, (pp. 60-78), concluding in Book 4 that the existence of the 'fluid' was a certainty.

Mesmerism Proved True - dedicated to Dr. Elliotson - was written as a reply to an anti-mesmeric article entitled 'Electro-Biology and Mesmerism', that appeared in The Quarterly Review in Sept. 1853. Apart from re-affirming the existence of the 'fluid', (pp. 182-183), the work contained accounts of the mesmerization of several notable people, including William Dougal Christie, (1816-1874), a diplomat and M.P. for Weymouth from 1842 to 1847, and Mr. Bush, attaché to the British Legation of Frankfurt, (pp. 77-79).

By far the most important of those whom Townshend reported having mesmerized in Mesmerism Proved True was the poet Arthur Hugh Clough, (1819-1861). Townshend described him as, "a very talented man ... author of some ^{very} clever poems, 'Ambarvalia' and 'the Bothie of Topernafuosick'," (p. 62). Townshend said: "He assured me ... that he knew nothing about Mesmerism, but was willing to try what it felt like." Townshend then mesmerised Clough, (p. 63), and in order to test the phenomenon of 'mesmeric rapport', he left him alone in the room. Entranced, Clough

immediately became distracted, and Townshend continued:

I found that the only means to calm him was to remain near him, and to make passes over him. When recovered he said 'You must not go away from me. When you did just now, it made me feel very ill', (p. 63).

Townshend did not supply a date of this extraordinary involvement of Clough, but since the latter was only thirty-five when Mesmerism Proved True was published, he was clearly quite young.

Edward Bulwer Lytton, (1803-1873), was one of the friends who first advocated mesmeric treatment to Harriet Martineau, (Autobiography, i, p. 472).

Lord Lytton was in fact interested in all branches of the occult. Robert Lee Wolff says that Lytton was interested in, "astrology, alchemy, mesmerism, clairvoyance, hypnotism, spiritualism, and magic: he investigated them all at first hand, and wrote about them all." (17).

Many of Lytton's novels had occult themes: Godolphin, (1833), concerns astrology and alchemy; The Last Days of Pompeii, (1834), has a magician-villain, Arbaces; Zanoni, (1842), concerns Rosicrucianism and immortality, and was one of the works that Harriet read and admired in the Tynemouth sick-room, (see Chapter 3).

Lytton, too, was a friend of Dr. Elliotson and the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, (Wolff, p. 235). It was Townshend who urged Lytton to consider Mesmerism as a fit subject for fiction, (Wolff, p. 236). Consequently Lytton wrote A Strange Story, (see Chapter 8).

Lytton was an avid supporter of the Zoist and of Elliotson's theories, and his essay On the Normal Clairvoyance of the Imagination, was written in support of Elliotson, although Robert Lee Wolff observes of it: "wrapped up in the tribute once more is the scepticism, this time not of mesmerism in general but of its clairvoyant aspects in particular...", (Wolff, p. 238).

Other interests of Lytton's apart from Mesmerism included phrenology, and the séances of D.D. Home, the Scottish-American spiritualist medium. (18).

The precise attitude of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, (1806-1861) towards Mesmerism has frequently been misunderstood and confused by critics. It is well known that Elizabeth was deeply interested in Spiritualism, whereas Browning, (1812-1889), deplored this concern of his wife's. As C.H. Herford observes: "spiritualism ... became during the later years a centre of fervid interest to the one and irritant to the other."(19).

Browning expressed his disgust at the activities of D.D. Home, (see above), Mr. Sludge the Medium, (1864). Elizabeth as well as Lord Lytton attended Home's séances. Edward Berdoe says that Browning "with great difficulty restrained his ... annoyance at the fact that his wife devoted so much time and attention to this aspect of human folly."(20).

However, whereas the Brownings' attitudes towards Spiritualism are clear, (Elizabeth, the believer, Robert, the unbeliever), in the case of Mesmerism there was a change in attitude as far as Elizabeth was concerned. Many critics over-simplify her approach; W.C. DeVane, for example, says that "Mesmerism was in its hey-day in 1844-5, and Elizabeth Barrett was, and continued to be, a believer ... Browning became gradually a more and more violent disbeliever in supernatural manifestations..."(21). Maisie Ward, too, over-simplifies Elizabeth's attitude, (22), while Edward Rea states that she "was more than half converted to mesmerism," (E. Rea, p. 358), and R.K. Webb observes that she "half, or more than half, believed in mesmerism", (R.K. Webb, p. 13).

The reactions of the Brownings to Harriet's cure have already been discussed, (Chapter 3), but it is worth repeating Elizabeth's attitude because it is important to realise that, whereas Spiritualism was her conviction and seems to have remained a strong one despite her husband's hostility to it, her enthusiasm for Mesmerism soon cooled, and, under Robert Browning's influence, was lost completely - despite De Vane's assertion as quoted above. A re-consideration of the quotations from

Elizabeth's letters, (Chapter 3), will indicate that her initial conviction and support of Mesmerism gave way to repulsion, then scepticism, and, finally, wry objectivity.

Osbert Burdett seems to have a more correct view of Elizabeth's attitude towards Mesmerism as distinct from that towards Spiritualism. He observes that, in view of the many mesmeric enthusiasts in her circle of friends, (including Harriet and Miss Mitford), it is surprising that Elizabeth "kept her head as well as she did." (23).

If Browning thought that, with Elizabeth's change in attitude towards Mesmerism, he had heard the end of mysterious powers and occult ethers like the mesmeric 'fluid', he was much mistaken. In later life he came into contact with Mrs. Clara Jessup Bloomfield-Moore, whom he met in 1879. She was a minor poetess who came to England from America and devoted herself to Browning for the next ten years. William Irvine and Park Honan call her an "eccentric Philadelphian widow," (24), and certainly her relationship with Browning was not regarded as purely 'platonic' in all quarters. (25).

Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore became a disciple of the imposter John Ernest Worrell Keely, (1827-1898). Keely claimed that he had discovered a new physical force akin to the magnetic 'fluid' of the mesmerists. According to him, "the supposed new force was explained ... as resulting from the intermolecular vibrations of ether," (26); the mesmerists, too, had regarded their fluid as a form of ether, (see Chapter 1).

Keely constructed a machine to respond to these ethereal vibrations, thereby aiming to produce power. When his stockholders lost faith in him, it was Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore who saved him from bankruptcy. Through Keely she became deeply interested in theories of magnetism and power-sources, and wrote several works supporting his theories: Keely and his discoveries, aerial navigation, (1893); The Keely Motor Bubble, (1890), and True Science, in support of the theories of J.E.W. Keely (1890).

Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore tried to interest Browning in Keely's theories

of a mysterious power-force. However, Browning, no doubt recalling his wife's enthusiastic response to Mesmerism, exhibited typical scepticism, and Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore wrote with regret:

... a smile of doubtful meaning played over his features; for Mr. Browning never expressed any faith in this 'modern Prometheus', as to his commercial success, which I so fully believe in. Keely's success as a discoverer is already attained and insured to him by the acknowledgement of the leading scientist in America that Keely has partial control of some unknown force.(27).

Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore never succeeded in converting Browning.

She continued:

In the letter of November 9, Mr. Browning alluded to a cablegram which I had received, before I left London, from Dr. Joseph Leidy, of the University of Pennsylvania, informing me that in his opinion 'Keely has command of some unknown force of most wonderful mechanical power'. Mr. Browning wrote, 'Seeing must be believing in my case: still, for your sake, I should be contented most cheerfully to pass with those who disbelieved in the steam-engine and electric telegraph. When Keely proves himself to be Vulcan I consent to be Momus', (p. 113).

Browning's scepticism was justified; following investigation of Keely's machine, Mrs. Bloomfield-Moore swiftly withdrew her support of him. But it was only after his death that his power-source machine was fully analysed and exposed as a complete hoax.

W.R. Greg, (1809-1881), the political and economic essayist, lived near Harriet at Ambleside. A convinced believer in Mesmerism, it was in fact this belief that particularly endeared him to Harriet on her taking up residence in Westmorland, (R.K. Webb, p. 14). He was especially interested in the clairvoyant phenomena of Mesmerism. Susanna Winkworth, writing of Harriet's Ambleside home, said:

The first time I ever met Mr. W.R. Greg was there, and he spent half the evening telling me stories about the famous medium, Alexis, reading books laid on his head when his eyes were bandaged, etc... with other stories of clairvoyants describing events at a distance.(28).

R.K. Webb refers to W.R. Greg as one of the "three Magi" who, with H.G. Atkinson and Professor Gregory, practised Mesmerism on Jane Arrowsmith, and on Harriet herself, (R.K. Webb, p. 259). W.R. Greg and Harriet finally disagreed about slavery and the American Civil War.

Richard Monckton Milnes, (1809-1885), Baron Houghton, politician, poet and economist, was at one time fascinated by Mesmerism. He was among those who visited Harriet in the Tynemouth sick-room, and he also wrote letters to her there and sent her some of his poetry.(29).

Monckton Milnes at one time courted Florence Nightingale, (1820-1910). They once went together to visit Professor Francis Trevelyan Buckland, (1826-1880), the famous naturalist, (whose uncle married Dr. Arnold's sister), at Christ Church, Oxford. Buckland had a small bear in his rooms which proved obstreperous when the party were at tea, and at Florence's suggestion the bear was mesmerised, and fell asleep.(30).

Monckton Milnes allowed his apartments in London to be used for mesmeric experimentation: it was there that W.D. Christie, (1816-1874), M.P. for Weymouth and later a notable diplomat, was mesmerised.(31).

W.M. Thackeray, (1811-1863), was certainly aware of Mesmerism, which he mentioned in Vanity Fair, (see following chapter). He was also a great friend of Dr. John Elliotson. On Sept. 17th, 1849, when Thackeray was writing Pendennis for serial publication, he became dangerously ill with a bilious fever. The doctor who came to his aid, was Elliotson, who ministered to him with utter devotion, until his recovery. It does not seem that Elliotson restored Thackeray by mesmeric means, but it is an indication of Elliotson's fine nature that he refused payment for his services.(32). In gratitude, Thackeray dedicated Pendennis to Elliotson and fictionalised him in the novel as Dr. Goodenough, (see following chapter). Although Mesmerism does not appear to have featured in any way in the relationship between Elliotson and Thackeray, it is important that Thackeray knew, and praised so highly, the man who guided the English Mesmeric movement, who founded the Zoist, and who was in many respects a 'martyr' to the cause, (see Chapter 1).

Wilkie Collins, (1824-1889), also introduced Elliotson into the world of fiction, referring to him in The Moonstone, a novel which, as

will be seen in the next chapter, has mesmeric thematic concerns. Moreover, the source of The Woman in White was probably an actual Mesmeric situation encountered by Collins.

Wilkie Collins, with his two mistresses, his illegitimate children, and his opium-addiction, lived, as J.I.M. Stewart says, "outside the ring-fence of Victorian convention." (33). Collins was also much interested in the mysterious and occult, and it is possibly significant that one of his later opium-hallucinations took a grotesquely supernatural form. J.I.M. Stewart says that, "towards the end of his life ... when he was going to bed, he used to meet at the turn of the stair a green woman with tusk teeth and the displeasing habit of biting a piece out of his shoulder," (p.19).

Perhaps one of the most famous figures of the 19th century to become involved in Mesmerism was Charles Dickens, (1812-1870). He was closely acquainted with Dr. Elliotson and the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, and was a practising mesmerist himself. Taylor Stoeher, who says that, "Dickens himself is known to have been an expert mesmerist," relates Dickens' interest in Mesmerism, physiognomy and phrenology, to his "dream fiction depending heavily on a bold juxtaposition of fact and fancy, the world of solid, statistical reality, and the world of mystery, passion and ideality." (34).

It was in 1838 that Dickens first "met Dr. John Elliotson and first became interested in mesmerism." (35). On 24th Nov, 1838, Dickens wrote to George Cruikshank, (1792-1878), artist and caricaturist: "Elliotson has written to me to go and see some experiments on Okey at his house at 3 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. He begs me to invite you. Will you come? Let me know." (36).

It seems that Dickens,

saw Elliotson magnetize sufferers totally unable to sleep into mesmeric slumber and witnessed some remarkable feats performed by a Belgian boy. Under mesmerism and blindfolded, the boy read the name of the maker of Kate's Geneva watch when it was held behind his head and also gave correctly the number inside it's case, (Johnson's Life, i, p. 221); Kate was, of course, Mrs. Dickens.

In 1840, "dining with Dr. Elliotson, he (Dickens) made the acquaintance of the Rev. Chauncey Hare Townshend, a gentleman who shared their host's enthusiastic interest in mesmerism," (Johnson's Life, i, pp. 300-301).

In 1842 Dickens visited America. He was already a convinced believer in Mesmerism. On Jan. 27th, 1842, he wrote to Robert Hanham Collyer, M.D., a well-known American physician and mesmerist, and former student of Elliotson's:

With regard to my opinion on the subject of Mesmerism, I have no hesitation in saying that I have closely watched Dr. Elliotson's experiments from the first - that he is one of my most intimate and valued friends - that I have the utmost reliance on his honor, character and ability, and would trust my life in his hands at any time - and that after what I have seen with my own eyes and observed with my own senses, I should be untrue both to him and myself, if I should shrink for a moment from saying that I am a believer, and that I become so against all my preconceived opinions, (Letters of C.D., iii, p. 23).

The publication of this letter aroused considerable journalistic controversy: The Baltimore Patriot, for instance, rejected Dickens' belief in Mesmerism as one of the 'Infirmities of Genius', whereas The New World praised Dickens' courage in frankly admitting a belief that might undermine his popularity, (Letters of C.D., iii, p. 23, Note 6).

While in America, Dickens was beset by a troublesome 'New Englander' and a doctor who was a phrenologist. It seems that,

The dread New Englander was very insistent that Dickens join them to 'form a magnetic chain' and magnetize the doctor, but Dickens declined on a plea of tremendous absorption in letter-writing, although he had successfully experimented in that way on Kate only a few days before at Pittsburgh. He had been holding forth on the subject and Kate laughingly offered herself as a victim, (Johnson's Life, i, p. 409).

Dickens wrote on that occasion: "in six minutes, I magnetized her into hysterics, and then into the magnetic sleep. I tried again next night, and she fell into the slumber in little more than two minutes." (37).

By far Dickens' most sensational mesmeric involvement, however, occurred in Italy. In 1844, in Genoa, Dickens made the acquaintance of

a Swiss banker, Emil De La Rue, and his wife. Later, the friendship became closer. Madame De La Rue,

suffered so distressingly from a nervous tic that Dickens felt sorry for her and suggested to her husband that he might be able to relieve her by means of those magic powers he had successfully exerted upon both Kate and Georgina, (his sister-in-law). Possibly her disorder would yield to hypnotic influences, as Kate's headaches had done. M. De La Rue gladly accepted Dicken's offer. Soon the experiment was under way, (Johnson's Life, i, p. 541).

However, the relationship intensified:

Mme De La Rue was presently making strange revelations. Her affliction, she told Dickens, was mysteriously rooted in terrifying hallucinations. She constantly found herself on a green hillside with a very blue sky above, sometimes surrounded by a crowd of men and women with invisible faces, sometimes alone but in great pain and terror, with stones hurled down upon her by some unseen people. But worst of all was a man haunting this place, its evil spirit, of whom she was so terrified that she dared not look upon him and trembled when she spoke of him. This phantom figure, the only one that spoke to her, was more horrible to her than all the others, and filled her with an agony of unending fear, (Johnson's Life, i, p. 541).

Dickens resolved to assist this lady with mesmeric passes: he,

felt convinced that he could banish the delusions by suggestion during the magnetic sleep, and was soon hearing Mme De La Rue's descriptions of the hill, the crowds of faceless people, and the man she called her bad spirit during her very hallucinations themselves. In these séances he subjected her to the most searching and persistent questioning, (Johnson's Life, i, pp. 541-542).

Eventually Mrs. Dickens grew suspicious of Madame De La Rue's dependence on Dickens: "The endeavour to exorcise these spectral forms necessitated prolonged meetings at all hours. They often took place, Kate was disturbed to observe, at the most unconventional times, and sometimes there was more than one in a day," (Johnson's Life, i, p. 542).

Dickens explained Madame De La Rue's distraction and terror, but Kate "did not like the situation and began to feel a suppressed antagonism to Mme De La Rue," (ibid.), and the antagonism was lessened only by the Dickens' removal southward on Jan. 19th, 1845.

However, Kate had not seen the end of the woman whom she now regarded almost as a rival for Dickens' attentions. When they arrived in Rome, the following month:

At the Hotel Meloni Dickens found that the De La Rues has also reserved rooms, and as soon as they arrived he began mesmerizing Mme De La Rue daily. Her worst times always came in the late hours of the night. Once Kate wakened to find Dickens striding up and down the bedroom with all the candles lit. He had just come from struggling with Mme De La Rue's terrors and was still violently agitated with the experience. It was not until one o'clock that he subdued his own emotion and returned to bed, (Johnson's Life, i, p. 552).

The mesmerization continued, and when the Dickens left Rome, Kate must have been dismayed to discover that the De La Rue's were to travel with them. As they proceeded towards Florence, Dickens mesmerized Madame De La Rue daily, "sometimes under olive trees, sometimes in vineyards, sometimes in the travelling carriage, sometimes at wayside inns during the midday halt," (Nonesuch Letters, iii, p. 752, Dickens to Le Fanu, Nov. 24th, 1869).

In Florence, Kate's antipathy towards Madame De La Rue increased: "her resentment ... had deepened to jealous certainty," (Johnson's Life, i, p. 555). Dickens refused to cease treating Madame De La Rue, however, for no other reason than his wife's fantastic speculations concerning his relationship with his 'patient'. Embarrassed, he informed Monsieur De La Rue of his wife's suspicions. The tensions within the group did not cease until June, when the Dickenses finally prepared to leave Italy. However, in preparing for this departure, Dickens feared that, when he had gone, Madame De La Rue's 'phantoms', which he had largely dissipated, would return. Therefore,

in consequence he suggested that M. De La Rue endeavour to acquire the mesmeric technique that had proved so useful in dealing with his wife's seizures, and offered his own services in making a beginning... While Kate, Georgina, Roche and the servants wrestled with the packing, therefore, Dickens was engaged in teaching M. De La Rue how to induce the magnetic sleep, (Johnson's Life, i, p. 559)

Apart from this involvement with Madame De La Rue, Dickens experienced another, dramatic incident in which his mesmeric powers were used. In the summer of 1849, while Dickens was staying at Bonchurch on the Isle of Wight with John Leech, (who illustrated A Christmas Carol), "Leech was knocked down while in bathing by a bad blow from a great wave, and developed

congestion of the brain," (Johnson's Life, ii, p. 670).

Dickens sat up with Leech all through the night, applying ice to his head. However, Leech deteriorated, becoming restless with pain, and was quite unable to sleep.

Dickens suggested trying to mesmerize him into a magnetic slumber... By this time Leech was throwing himself ceaselessly about... An hour and a half passed before he could be tranquilized enough to be put to sleep, but then he fell into a quiet rest, and awoke much better, (Johnson's Life, ii, p. 670).

Despite Dickens' clearly deep involvement in Mesmerism, I think that Martin Fido justifiably rejects the notion that "the literally hypnotic power he possessed may have contributed to Dickens' success towards the end of his life in swaying the huge audiences who came to hear him give public readings from his works." (38).

Charles Kingsley, (1819-1875), was also involved in Mesmerism at one time. He first encountered the phenomenon at Cambridge during his days as a student, after 1838, through his friend Charles Mansfield, (1819-1855). Kingsley wrote of Mansfield: "Ornithology, geology, mesmerism, even old magic, were his pastimes." (39).

Brenda Colloms writes of Mansfield that, "he and Kingsley dabbled in mesmerism, discussing health and personality in terms of 'animal magnetism' and being 'magnetised' or 'demagnetised'." (40).

Kingsley's interest in the phenomenon persisted beyond his Cambridge days. Margaret Thorp observes that in his Common-Place Book, on July 17th, 1847, Kingsley recorded having mesmerised a boy for fits. (41).

Only two years later, Kingsley himself collapsed with fatigue due to over-working. Mesmerism was resorted to, and, as Susan Chitty states, Mansfield was again involved:

Mansfield was convinced of the efficacy of the Mesmerism with which the two young men had experimented in their Cambridge days. His theory was that by making passes before the eyes of his patient he could hypnotise him and restore his 'animal magnetism'. The method was exhausting to the practitioner and eventually he

had to return to London, having developed toothache and a swollen face after an exceptionally long session.(42).

Professor Thomas Henry Huxley, (1825-1895), the biologist, was also interested in Mesmerism, according to Harriet Martineau. She wrote to Mrs. Chapman on Aug. 23rd, 1876: "even Professor Huxley has at length expressed his interest in mesmerism," ('Memorials', Autobiography, ii, p. 419).

If her claim were indeed well-founded, Professor Huxley would doubtless have been interested in a comment of his grandson Aldous Huxley, who wrote to George Orwell on Oct. 21, 1949:

I have had occasion recently to look into the history of animal magnetism and hypnotism, and have been greatly struck by the way in which, for a hundred and fifty years, the world has refused to take serious cognizance of the discoveries of Mesmer, Braid, Esdaile and the rest. Partly because of the prevailing materialism and partly because of prevailing respectability, nineteenth-century philosophers and men of science were not willing to investigate the odder facts of psychology.(43).

Returning to the 19th century, it is interesting that Dante Gabriel Rossetti, (1828-1882), became involved in Mesmerism through the spiritualist medium, Samuel Bergheim. Rossetti's brother, W.M. Rossetti, wrote:

I have just been referring to the superstitious or semi-superstitious traits in my brother's character, which were very clearly marked. Thirteen at table was a contingency which did not escape his notice... Mr. Bell Scott says that 'he began to call up the spirit of his wife by table-turning,' and relates an incident of the kind happening in 1866; and he adds that 'long before that year' my brother had 'gone into spiritualism'.(44).

William Rossetti says that he had witnessed such attempts in 1865, 1866, 1868 and 1870, and he comments that "especially some in which a Mr. Bergheim was concerned ... astonished me not a little," (ibid.).

Samuel Bergheim was also a mesmerist, as William Gaunt relates:

In the garden at Cheyne Walk Gabriel received the mesmerist Bergheim. George Augustus Sala, the famous journalist, F.R. Leyland and Howell were there. Bergheim mesmerised two women assistants he had brought and suggested to them various acts which they carried out in a way only possible in a trance. One, to whom it

was suggested that she was in charge of a small child about to be run over, picked up a heavy man (who was asked to represent the child) and moved him with ease - Rossetti was seriously impressed.(45).

He was impressed enough to suggest the medical use of Mesmerism in the treatment of painter and essayist James Smetham, (1821-1889). Rossetti wrote to William Davies on Feb. 29th, 1878:

But to the all-important question of S(metham)'s health. His wife ... last writes me that he has been rather worse since last Sunday; but seeing his son Edwin this morning, I learn that since that date the doctor has succeeded in compelling him to rise and sit in another room for an hour daily. This is a first step in the right direction: the 'worse' seems to have meant that he showed tendency to violence... My own conviction from experience is that mesmerism ought certainly to be tried in his case, and I believe great benefit would shortly result. The Cowper-Temples ... are strongly of this opinion.(46).

Laurence Oliphant, (1829-1888), war correspondent, journalist, novelist and mystic seems, like Rossetti, to have encountered magnetism through a spiritualist medium. Oliphant fell under the sinister influence of the spiritualist prophet Thomas Lake Harris, who led - or rather ruled - an American commune. Oliphant became Harris' complete spiritual slave and minion. Harris conducted exorcisms, using his disciples by placing them in magnetic circles: "He arranged them in groups of three or four persons to assimilate; but if the magnetism of one was found to be injurious to another, Harris was aware of it at once, and instantly separated them".(47)

These sessions, although not mesmeric in name, involved the use of 'magnetic' power, and are highly reminiscent of the old mesmeric sessions of Mesmer, whose subjects, grouped in circles, sat around the mesmeric vat, (see Chapter 1). Moreover, Harris' influence over Oliphant, his mother and his wife was very similar to the traditional, sinister influence of the stock-mesmerist over his subjects.

Oliphant, who attended spiritualist séances in Paris, (pp. 128-129), was interested in Mesmerism and hypnotism. Later he attended some of Charcot's hypnotic experiments at the Salpêtrière hospital, and commented on the hypnotists' activities:

They have got to the length of feeling that a law must be passed prohibiting people from magnetising one another in consequence of the number of patients who arrive mentally injured by amateurs amusing themselves in this direction. They will soon discover that they are amateurs themselves, and must injure people unless they probe more deeply, and admit the existence of influences they still try to ignore. The priests, at all events, have the courage of their convictions, and boldly say it is the devil, (p. 339).

George du Maurier, (1834-1896), was fascinated by the strange and occult. His first novel, Peter Ibbotson, (1892), was a tale of brutal murder and insanity, with an extensive use of dreams. The latter interested F.W.H. Myers, the president of the Society for Psychical Research. Myers was "struck, like all other readers, by the idea of joint simultaneous dreaming," (Wolff, p. 55). Myers consequently wrote to du Maurier, and Wolff says that he possesses du Maurier's unpublished reply, (ibid.).

Mesmerism, too, was among du Maurier's interests. He investigated with his friend Felix Moscheles, a bohemian artist. Leonée Ormond writes: "Moscheles and Du Maurier were experimenting with mesmerism in Antwerp in 1859." (48). Ormond draws a comparison between Trilby, the heroine of du Maurier's novel, (see Chapter 8), and "Carry, the tobacconist's assistant in Malines, whom du Maurier and Moscheles had tried to hypnotise," (p. 451).

Finally, it is surprising to discover that even Gerard Manley Hopkins, (1844-1889), was interested in Mesmerism, and that he conducted an experiment, recording:

Mesmerised a duck with chalk lines drawn from her beak sometimes level and sometimes forwards on a black table. They explain that the bird, keeping the abiding offscap of the hand grasping her neck, fancies she is still held down and cannot lift her head as long as she looks at the chalk line, which she associates with the hand that holds her. This duck lifted her head at once when I put it down on the table without chalk. But this seems inadequate. It is most likely the fascinating instress of the straight white stroke. (49).

The incident was clearly given a certain interpretation by Hopkins; he seems to have seen the hypnotic effect produced on the duck as deriving from the 'instress', the self-manifestation of the pronounced white line at which the bird was forced to stare by Hopkins.

What, therefore, should one conclude from the evidence that Mesmerism both aroused the interest of, and was even believed in, by many notable figures of the 19th century?

It will have been noted that most of these people were either scientists, politicians, or artists. The interest of the scientists - Professors Gregory, Huxley, Buckland and so on - can be explained in terms of their obvious desire to investigate a subject relating so closely to their own fields of physiology and medicine. The attention paid to Mesmerism by politicians and economists - W.D. Christie, W.R. Greg, Cowper-Temple, Monckton Milnes etc. - can partly be accounted for by their general interest in power-relationships but, I think, more realistically in terms of their consideration of social interests and preoccupations. In particular they were probably attracted by a contemporary enthusiasm which embraced social awareness and concern as vigorously as did Mesmerism: the mesmerists related their 'science' to educational concerns, criminal law, capital punishment, reform, and so on, (see Chapter 1).

It is clear, however, that the largest group of notable Victorians interested in Mesmerism, were poets, novelists, painters, musicians etc. How can one account for the interests of these artists in the subject? Should one simply agree with the American journalist who attributed Dickens' Mesmerism to the 'infirmities of Genius'? In attempting to resolve these questions a number of important factors should be considered.

First, it is necessary to remember that Mesmerism is not easily defined. The phenomenon itself was by no means static: there was a considerable development, as we have seen, from the time of vague theorizing about human magnetism in the 18th century, until the 'dawn' of modern hypnosis. There was a corresponding development in the ways of considering, conceptualising and discussing the phenomenon involved. Mesmerism therefore meant something very different to Dr. Arnold and Coleridge, from what it meant to Gerard Manley Hopkins. Mesmer's 'theatricals' were in time replaced; he himself abandoned the use of magnets and followed Gassner

in using manipulation; the Marquis de Puysegur rejected Mesmer's vat and iron rods to use even gentler manipulation; Elliotson applied more scientific methods to investigate the phenomenon; Braid rejected the 'fluid' concept and introduced the term 'hypnotism'; and later still followed the developments of psychiatry and the exploration of the power of suggestion, auto-suggestion, and the therapeutic effects of deep relaxation experienced in trance, on nervous disorders.

Dr. Arnold would have known nothing of the later developments; Hopkins would have been acquainted with some of them. It is therefore pointless to argue that because Dickens spoke of mesmerising people, he believed absolutely in all of Mesmer's theories and ideas. It is unlikely that he believed in the 'universal fluid'; some of these figures - for instance, the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend - believed absolutely in the 'fluid'; whereas other, later investigators obviously did not.

It is clear, in view of the development from Mesmerism into hypnosis, that when some of these people expressed a belief in 'Mesmerism', what they in fact intended to imply was a belief in hypnosis. Thus Hopkins, when he spoke of 'mesmerizing' a duck, clearly meant to infer that he hypnotised it, and not that he necessarily believed everything that Mesmer had said and endorsed everything that Mesmer did.

Secondly, the interest of some of these people in Mesmerism should certainly be regarded within the context of other theories they held or interests they pursued, although there is a great danger in generalising where occult subjects are concerned. It is nonsense to consider Mesmerism as if it were synonymous with Spiritualism, (as some have done), and to assume that belief in one automatically implied belief in both, and in astrology, alchemy, sorcery, etc. Such implications are quite groundless; indeed, we have seen that Elizabeth Barrett Browning, a convinced spiritualist, rejected Mesmerism, while a mesmerist like Harriet Martineau had little time for Spiritualism. Nevertheless, it is perhaps as well to remember that some individual mesmeric enthusiasts, such as Rossetti,

also believed in Spiritualism, while others, like Lord Lytton, were indeed interested in several areas of the occult. Again, Wilkie Collins and Coleridge were interested in the mind, consciousness, dreams, the influence of opium upon human awareness etc., and an interest in mesmeric trance follows naturally from this.

Thirdly, it again needs to be stressed that genuine truths lay within Mesmerism, which incorporated some psychological realities, the genuine possibility of placing an individual in a state of trance by means of hypnosis, and so on, and the possibility too of assisting nervous complaints and neuroses by means of mesmeric suggestion. It is therefore quite likely that Dickens was able to cure Madame De La Rue - not by instilling strange magnetic power into her, but by inducing deep relaxation that actually affected her neurotic hysteria.

Fourthly, it is as well to remember that much remains to be learned and understood of the workings of the Mind. One should not dismiss W.R. Greg's interest in clairvoyant stories as naive superstition. It seems that some individuals at certain times do have perceptions and intuitions which cannot be readily explained. Myers' Society for Psychical Research still exists and investigates instances of apparent 'extra-sensory perception', telepathy and para-normal phenomena. It seems that all that can be deduced from such investigations is the total inconsistency of the phenomena concerned, but one day they may be explicable in scientific terms, as hypnotism is explained today.

These areas of interest continue to be investigated, and it is perhaps more profitable to see the attention paid by many intelligent and creative minds of the 19th century to Mesmerism in terms of this movement, rather than as the superstitious enthusiasm of a number of eccentric Victorians.

Some of those writers interested in Mesmerism introduced the subject as a suitable theme in their creative work. Others did not

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

- (1) Rev. George Sandby: Mesmerism and its Opponents, (1848), p. 44.
This work will in future be cited as 'Sandby'.
- (2) The Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, hitherto unpublished, ed. Kathleen Coburn, (1949), p. 45.
This work will in future be referred to as Philosophical Lectures.
- (3) Inquiring Spirit, a new presentation of Coleridge from his published and unpublished prose writings, ed. Kathleen Coburn, (1951), p. 45.
This work will in future be referred to as Inquiring Spirit.
- (4) Coleridge: The Table Talk and Omniana, ed. H.N. Coleridge, (1917), p. 83. This work will in future be referred to as Table Talk.
- (5) Edith J. Morley: The Life and Times of Henry Crabb Robinson, (1935), p. 87.
- (6) Neville Rogers: Shelley at Work: A Critical Enquiry, (1956), p. 45.
This work is later referred to as 'Rogers'.
Matthew Gregory, ('Monk') Lewis, (1775-1818), was a 'Gothic' novelist, author of The Monk, (1796).
J.W. Polidori, (1795-1821), was Byron's physician and secretary, and wrote The Vampyre, (1819). His sister married Gabriele Rossetti, and was the mother of D.G. Rossetti and Christina Rossetti.
Polidori was also well-known to the young Harriet Martineau. He visited her family in Norwich, being in love with Harriet's elder sister Elizabeth at the time. Harriet appears to have had a 'crush' on him, for she wrote: "We younger ones romanced amazingly about him", (Autobiography, i, p. 62).
- (7) Mary Shelley's Journal, ed. F.L. Jones, (1947), Oklahoma University Press, p. 57.
- (8) Library of Congress Notebook, first published F.L. Jones, Studies in Philology, 45, no. 3, July 1948, pp. 472-476.
- (9) Life and Correspondence of Thomas Arnold, ed. A.P. Stanley, (1844) ii, pp. 37 and 90.

- (10) Dr. Thomas Arnold: Sermons, (1829-1834), iii, pp. 245-246.
 - (11) The Zoist, Vol. 11, Mar. 1853- Jan. 1854, p. 45, asserted Dr. Arnold's belief in Mesmerism, as did the Rev. George Sandby, (Sandby, pp. 45 and 213).
 - (12) Matthew Arnold: Poems, ed. Kenneth Allott, (1965), 'Haworth Churchyard', p. 392, lines 41-46.
 - (13) Edward Rea: A Study of Harriet Martineau, unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, (1969), pp. 80, 90-91. This work will in future be cited as 'E. Rea'.
 - (14) The New Zealand Letters of Thomas Arnold the Younger, ed. James Bertram, (1966), Auckland University Press, Wellington, p. 38, (quoting from a letter of Clough to Burbridge, Jan. 19th, 1846: Mulhauser, p. 130).
 - (15) Jane Welsh Carlyle: Letters and Memorials, (1883), ed. J.A. Froude, ii, pp. 21-25, letter 2, dated Dec. 13th, 1847.
 - (16) The Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend contributed the following articles to the Zoist:-

Vol. 9, Mar. 1851- Jan. 1852, pp. 228-229, 'Mesmerism in Ancient Egypt', (from a letter to Dr. Elliotson of Sept. 5th, 1851).

Vol. 9, pp. 402 and 410, on the Clairvoyance of Alexis Didier.

Vol. 10, Mar. 1852- Jan. 1853, pp. 409-410, on clairvoyance and the mesmerization of Alexis Didier's brother, Adolphe Didier, (a report by Elliotson from Townshend's letters).

Vol. 11, Mar. 1853-Jan. 1854, p. 75, on clairvoyance.

Vol. 11, p. 185, on table-turning.

Vol. 12, Apr. 1854- Jan. 1855, pp. 17, 27, 278, 375-381, 417-420, reviews of, and extracts from, Mesmerism Proved True.

Vol. 13, Apr. 1855- Jan. 1856, pp. 88-90, on clairvoyance.

Vol. 13, pp. 419-440, on the great prison at Munich, (again, both articles submitted by Elliotson from Townshend's accounts).
 - (17) Robert Lee Wolff: Strange Stories and other explorations in Victorian fiction, (1971), Boston, pp. 148-149. This work is later referred to as 'Wolff'.
 - (18) Wolff states that Lytton attended various phrenological sessions, including one when a cast was taken of the head of Dr. John Ashburner, (see Chapter 3, note 19), Wolff, p. 241.
- Lytton's attendance at a spiritualist séance was recorded by D.D. Home

in Incidents in My Life, (1864), pp. 65-66, when a spirit manifested itself claiming to have been the inspiration of Zanoni.

Home's wife said that Lytton was too timid in not publicly supporting Spiritualism, Madame D.D. Home: D.D. Home, his Life and Mission, (1888), edition of 1921, p. 31.

There were suggestions that Lytton was also a member of a magicians' club in London. The Mahatmas referred to a "secret school for the practical teaching of magick, founded... under the leadership of Lord Lytton's father," The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett, (from the Mahatmas M. and K.H.), ed. A.T. Barker, (1926), p. 210.

R.L. Wolff rejects such reports as untrue. (Wolff, p. 264).

- (19) G.H. Herford: Robert Browning, (1905), p. 87.
- (20) Edward Berdoo: The Browning Cyclopaedia, (1891), p. 278.
- (21) W.C. De Vane: A. Browning Handbook, (1937), p. 201.
- (22) Maisie Ward: Robert Browning and his World: The Private Face, 1812-1861, (1967), discusses Mesmerism and Spritualism as if they were synonymous, confusing them, (pp. 125-126, 236), and observing in generalisation: "Other friendships were made this year - with Lady Elgin, whom Elizabeth was at one about spiritualism, mesmerism, clairvoyance, visions, and the like," (p. 200).
- (23) Osbert Burdett: The Brownings, (1928), p. 58.
- (24) William Irvine and Park Honan: The Book, the Ring, and the Poet, a Biography of Robert Browning, New York, (1974), p. 493.
- (25) Betty Miller: Robert Browning, A Portrait, (1952), pp. 267-269.
- (26) Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Dumas Malone, (1933) Vol. 10, p. 280.
- (27) G.J. Bloomfield-Moore: 'Robert Browning', Browning Society Papers, Vol. 3, part (i), May 1890, p. 112. The following quotation is also from this article.
- (28) Susanna and Catharine Winkworth: Memorials of Two Sisters, ed. M.J. Shaen,

(1908).

Alexis (Didier) was the notable French somnambule, see Chapter 3, note 11.

- (29) Anna Jameson: Letters and Friendships, 1812-1866, ed. Mrs. Steuart Erskine, (1915), p. 216; in a letter of 1842 to Lady Byron.
- (30) Cecil Woodham-Smith: The Life of Florence Nightingale, (1950), p. 64.
- (31) The Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend: Mesmerism Proved True, (1854), p. 77.

Monckton Milnes had also observed mesmeric phenomena in the East, Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ed. F.G. Kenyon, (1897), i, p. 217.

- (32) Gordon N. Ray: Thackeray, (ii), The Age of Wisdom, (1958), p. 87.
- (33) J.I.M. Stewart: Introduction to The Moonstone, Penguin edtn., (1966), pp. 9-10. The following quotation is from this edition.
- (34) Taylor Stoehr: Dickens, the Dreamer's Stance, New York, (1965), p. 274.
- (35) Edgar Johnson: Charles Dickens, his Tragedy and Triumph, (1952), Boston, i, p. 221. The work will in future be referred to as 'Johnson's Life'.
- (36) The Letters of Charles Dickens, Pilgrim edtn., ed. Madeline House and Graham Storey, (1965), i, 1820-1839, p. 461. This work will in future be cited as Letters of C.D.

The reference to 'Okey' is to one of the two sisters Okey, mesmeric clairvoyants, (see Chapter 1).

- (37) The Letters of Charles Dickens, Nonesuch edtn., ed. Walter Dexter, (1938), i, 1832-1846; Letter to Forster, April 2nd, 1842. The work will in future be referred to as Nonesuch Letters.
- (38) Martin Fido: Charles Dickens, An authentic account of his life and his times, (1970), p. 63.
- (39) Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memorials of his Life, ed. by his wife, (1877), i, p. 443.
- (40) Brenda Colloms: Charles Kingsley, the Lion of Eversley (1975), p. 44.

- (41) Margaret F. Thorp: Charles Kingsley, 1819-1875, (1937), p. 176.
- (42) Susan Chitty: The Beast and the Monk, (1974), p. 119
- (43) Letters of Aldous Huxley, ed. Grover Smith, (1969), p. 604.
- (44) D.G. Rossetti, His Family Letters, with a memorial by W.M. Rossetti, (1895), i, p. 255.

Bell Scott referred disapprovingly to "the unpleasant subject of mesmerism," Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott, 1830-1882, ed. W. Minto, (1892), i, p. 235.

- (45) William Gaunt: The Pre-Raphaelite Dream, (1943), (formerly The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy, 1942), p. 142.

George Augustus Henry Sala, (1828-1895), was a journalist who wrote various works including novels, travel-books, and an autobiography.

- (46) Letters of D.G. Rossetti, ed. O. Doughty and J.R. Wahl, (1967), v, p. 1557.

Cowper-Temple was William Francis Cowper, later Baron Mount-Temple, (1811-1888). M.P. for Hertford, and South Hampshire, he became Lord of the Admiralty, (1846-1852), President of the Board of Health and Privy Councillor, (1855), Vice-President of the ^{Committee of} Council on Education, (1857-1858), and was raised to the peerage in 1880.

- (47) Margaret Oliphant W Oliphant: Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice Oliphant, his wife, (1891), ii, p. 25. Subsequent references are to this volume.

- (48) Leonée Ormond: George du Maurier, (1969), p. 447.

The following reference is to this work.

Felix Moscheles, (1833-1917), poet, painter and pacifist, was the son of Ignaz Moscheles, (1794-1870), the Czech-Jewish piano virtuoso, composer and teacher, who taught Mendelssohn.

The Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend also conducted his first mesmeric investigations in Antwerp, Facts in Mesmerism, (1844), p. 38.

- (49) G.M. Hopkins: Notebooks and Papers, ed. Humphrey House, (1937), p. 144.
Journal entry for April 27th, 1871.

CHAPTER EIGHT : MESMERISM AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Mesmerism did not have a tremendous impact upon literature; there are comparatively few works concerned with Mesmerism, which is surprising in view of the great social controversies which it caused, and the interest it aroused in literary circles.

For reasons given at the beginning of Chapter 7, the mesmeric 'craze' was partly escapist; so too was much of the literature which contained mesmeric themes. It is perhaps profitable to discuss 'mesmeric' literature along with other non-realistic, non-rational fiction; the nonsense literature of Carroll and Lear; the Gothic novel; the 'penny dreadful' and the 'shilling shocker', (the latter were popular, abridged versions of Gothic novels with the most horrific and terrifying elements accentuated). The ghost story, mystery tales, futuristic and early science fiction - even dream and visionary literature could be said to have derived some of its appeal from its rejection of harsh 'realism'.

It is within this broad tradition of non-realistic literature that Mesmerism takes its place as a fictional theme, in novels, poetry, and on the stage.

Mesmerism did not originate in England; its ancient roots apart, its appearance in 'modern' times occurred first on the Continent. The Rev. George Sandby lists mesmeric activities as taking place in Germany, Prussia, Sweden, Russia, Denmark, France and America.(1). One would therefore expect Mesmerism to appear in other national literatures too, and indeed in Germany, Hoffman, (1776-1822), and in France, Balzac, (1799-1850), were both influenced by Mesmerism in some of their writings. Edwin Preston Dargan describes Balzac's mystical philosophy as a "hodgepodge of Swedenborgianism, mesmerism, eye power, and will power," and he calls it "a pragmatic and compelling thing".(2).

Mesmerism affected American literature too. In 1844, Emerson, (1803-1882), saw Mesmerism as one of the influences which make poets

"liberating gods", saying:

All the value which attaches to Pythagoras, Paracelsus, Cornelius, Agrippa, Cardan, Kepler, Swedenborg, Schelling, Oken, or any other who introduces questionable facts into his cosmogony, as angels, devils, magic, astrology, palmistry, mesmerism, and so on, is the certificate we have of departure from Routine, and that there is a witness.(3).

American literature provides two good examples of fictional presentation of two aspects of literary Mesmerism - the psycho-sexual, and the purely horrific.

In Blithedale Romance, (1852), Hawthorne, (1804-1864), took the classic mesmeric theme of the sinister, implicitly sexual attempt of an older man, the mesmerist, to subject an innocent young woman. The exploration of this typical theme relates to a consideration of the psychology of sexual relationships as some have seen them, the idea of a struggle between two individuals. In Blithedale Romance, the heroine, Priscilla, falls under the mysterious influence of a mesmerist named Westervelt. She is rescued from him by the hero, Hollingsworth, an honest, one-time blacksmith whose goodness contrasts with Westervelt's evil.

Poe, (1809-1849), explored the other form of mesmeric literary theme, the horrific, in The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar, (1845). David Galloway describes the story as "certainly Poe's most horrific story".(4). It concerns the narrator, P--, a mesmerist, who aims to perform a hitherto unattempted experiment, the mesmerization of a dying man. The latter, Valdemar, co-operates. He is mesmerized at the point of death and enters a state of suspension in trance, in which he remains for several months. He pronounces that he has in fact died. When the mesmerist finally 're-awakens' Valdemar, the body at once assumes the condition which it would have reached naturally, and immediately rots into "a nearly liquid mass of loathsome - of detestable putridity," (p. 359),(5).

There appear to be four main approaches to Mesmerism revealed in creative literature of the 19th century.

First, there was the serious treatment, depending upon a literal

exploration of Mesmerism. However controversial Mesmerism may have been socially, and however much characters like Harriet Martineau, the believers, were ridiculed, creative writers did see the value of Mesmerism as a serious literary theme, as more than a target for satire.

As already intimated, most of the serious mesmeric works place the phenomenon within a sexual context, presenting a situation in which a man dominates a woman whom he either loves or relates to in some sexual way, and over whom he gains control by exercising sinister hypnotic or mesmeric powers.

This idea had its origin in supposed reality; like the mesmerist and his subject in these novels, H.G. Atkinson was often thought to have subjected Harriet Martineau in an overtly sexual sense, and Kate Dickens suspected a sexual attraction in Dickens' wish to mesmerise Madame De La Rue. Dr. Elliotson, too, was similarly suspected by some in his relationship with his mesmeric somnambules, the Okey sisters. Such popular ideas were heightened by the 'facts' of mesmeric 'rapport', in which a person's subjection to their mesmerist could be illustrated by the latter's ability to induce responses in the subject, and to make the subject receive impressions as the mesmerist willed.

This concept of Mesmerism as the mesmeric domination of a woman by a man is part of a wider literary tradition - the sinister subjection of women by men. Examples of this abound: in Henry James' Portrait of a Lady, (1881), Isabel Archer falls under the influence of Gilbert Osmond, and in Patrick Hamilton's Gaslight, (1938), a murderer, Manningham, achieves a sinister mastery over his wife Bella. This theme of sinister subjection of women by men has further, broader implications, relating to the concept of sexual relationships involving male domination, for example in the master-pupil relationship of some of Charlotte Brontë's novels, and the master-servant relationship of works such as Richardson's Pamela, (1740-1741). Stories of wives living in subjection to their husbands are of course older than Chaucer's patient Griselda and Walter in The Clerk's Tale.

There is evidence to suggest, moreover, that some mesmerists considered women to be weaker in some way that made them more easily mesmerised and subjected to the influence. Doubtless this attitude contributed to the tendency of fiction to portray Mesmerism in terms of a woman's subjection by a man. In a highly chauvinistic article, Alphonse Teste, (b. 1808), the French physician, was quoted in the Mesmerist as having said:

Women, generally speaking, are incomparably more magnetizable than men. This may be easily conceived if we admit, and it is true, that magnetic susceptibility is only ... a negative faculty which tends to render the soul and the whole organization passive to an exterior power. Every thing in the nature of woman seems to incline them to this sort of dependence which, in their normal state constitutes, in the greater number of them, one of the marked peculiarities of their organization and of their manners. Nearly all women even feel a desire to prove this dependence when it is not made to become a painful servility. Dominion, with some exceptions which seem anomalies, is above their power, and, by their own avowal, out of the scope of their instincts.(6).

The literature of 'sexual Mesmerism', therefore, existed within the tradition of a sinister male's domination of a female, and this, in turn, existed within the broad tradition of Woman's subjection to Man. However, the particular identity of mesmeric sexual literature is the man's use of mesmeric or hypnotic powers to obtain dominion and power over the woman. Indeed, the theme can be detected in modern fiction. For example, in Saul Bellow's Dangling Man, (1963), there occurs an implicitly sexual scene in which a man 'hypnotises' his ex-lover.(7).

In the 19th and early 20th centuries this use of hypnotic or mesmeric influence is sometimes implicit, (e.g. in Dickens' Edwin Drood, 1870, John Jasper's relationship with Rosa is implicitly hypnotic rather than explicitly mesmeric). It is usually explicit, however, e.g. Svengali and Trilby in du Maurier's Trilby, (1894), Westervelt and Priscilla in Hawthorne's Blithedale Romance, (1852), Edgar Caswall and Lilla Watford in Stoker's The Lair of the White Worm, (1911), and the situation which provided the source of Wilkie Collins' The Woman in White, (1859-1860).

The second main approach to Mesmerism in literature is the serious

treatment of non-sexual Mesmerism. Although writers with a serious interest in the theme tended to explore it in this sexual context, it did appear in non-sexual situations too, for example in Bulwer Lytton's A Strange Story, (1862), in which Mesmerism is induced for clairvoyant purposes, (although a sexual abduction has in fact occurred), and in J.R. Ware's play The Polish Jew, c. 1864, where mesmeric trance, (though only dreamed), is introduced to secure a confession of guilt. Again, however, these events occur against the 'sexual' background of a marriage-celebration. Poe's The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar, (1845), though to us so absurd that its effect is now almost comic, was certainly not intended as such. Finally, in Wilkie Collins' The Moonstone, (1868), Mesmerism is introduced, again, within the context of clairvoyance, although later discredited by the doctor.

The third approach to Mesmerism is its symbolic usage. Mesmerism easily lends itself as an image of power: in Browning's Mesmerism, (1855), although the poet speaks of mesmerising his lover, the impression which the reader receives is more one of the triumph of emotional power than of an actual mesmeric séance occurring.

In Arnold's The Scholar Gipsy, which was originally to have been entitled The First Mesmerist, (1849), or The Wandering Mesmerist, (1851), it is impossible to consider the 'Mesmerism' of which the poet speaks as mesmerising properly so-called, because the 17th century setting of the poem is earlier than Mesmer, (though of course not earlier than the magnetic theories that pre-dated his 'science'). What Arnold had in mind appears to have been the symbolic value of Mesmerism in terms of primitive 'power', the psychic power of Man, his intuitive awareness in the natural state, a power which is destroyed by the sophisticating processes of civilisation and industrialisation.

Fourthly there is the satiric and light-hearted use of Mesmerism, of which there are surprisingly few examples in view of the obvious potential which Mesmerism has for ridicule and comic treatment. One possible reason

is that those who opposed the phenomenon, such as Charlotte Elizabeth (Tonna), tended to attack it more directly than by satiric portrayal, while, as we have seen, those writers interested in Mesmerism tended either to believe in it or to be fascinated by it, hence their more serious use of the theme. However, Hood's Animal Magnetism, (c. 1840), is an example of satiric handling of Mesmerism.

There seems to have been little portrayal of fraudulent, bogus or pecuniary mesmerists. One comic treatment of Mesmerism, however, is Mrs. Inchbald's play Animal Magnetism (c.1789), although Mesmerism is less a 'target' in the work ^{than} ~~so much as~~ the comic means whereby a young girl is freed from her guardian's clutches and united with her lover.

An interesting contrast with this tendency of literature away from the exposure of mesmeric corruption and the ridicule of the phenomenon, is the very different fate which Spiritualism has encountered. Throughout literature, Spiritualism has normally been introduced in order to expose or ridicule fraudulent, corrupt or naive mediums, and to mock séances. For example, Browning's denunciatory Mr. Sludge the Medium, (1864); George Eliot's "It must be the spirits," (Daniel Deronda, Chapter 6), which Barbara Hardy sees as "an amused reference to fashionable spiritualism", (my emphasis), (8); Dickens' "A Medium of the present day," (Great Expectations, Chapter 4), which Angus Calder regards as "a jibe at the exploits of spiritualists", (9); H.G. Wells' James Chaffery, the fraudulent medium in Love and Mr. Lewisham, (1900); Coward's Madame Arcati in Blithe Spirit, (1941), whom Milton Levin rightly calls "a comic invention", (10); the trivial séances of Ida Arnold and Old Crowe in Greene's Brighton Rock, (1938, liii, and 7x); the seedy disreputable old medium in Orwell's Coming Up for Air, (1939, II, 10), and Patrick Seton in Muriel Spark's The Bachelors, (1960), etc

In view of this comic or exposing attitude towards Spiritualism and the literary treatment of it, it is difficult to explain why Mesmerism and mesmerists have been treated with comparative seriousness, even if it has been to stress the evil or sinister aspects of the phenomenon. It may be

that Spiritualism, in its exploitation by some of the bereaved and vulnerable, has deservedly met with this fate at the hands of creative writers, or that the triviality of many séance-activities provides a marked contrast with the usefulness of mesmeric cures: we must remember that it was not so much the cures themselves which were criticised as the reasons given for them. It is also significant that, whereas modern Spiritualism has certainly declined in popularity and remains a concern of a minority, the successor of Mesmerism, hypnosis, is today generally recognised as playing a valuable role in certain areas of psychiatry. Of greater interest, however, is the fact that whereas writers have usually seen in Spiritualism a potential for mockery and comedy, in Mesmerism they have tended to perceive, and focus their attention upon, its value as the embodiment of power, usually of sexual power, as a symbol or manifestation of the human will, as the strength of the human mind.

The following section consists of a discussion of literary Mesmerism, its appearance in fiction and the way in which it has been handled by writers; the material should not be regarded as an exhaustive catalogue of sources, but as an indication of how the phenomenon was handled, and in what different ways, in the literature of the time. The examples are given in alphabetical order of the authors' names.

(1) Matthew Arnold, (1822-1888): The Scholar Gipsy

(Poems of Matthew Arnold, ed. Kenneth Allott, 1965, pp. 333-344).

In late 1848 or early 1849, Arnold, compiling a list of poems which he proposed composing in 1849, included among the titles, 'The First Mesmerist'.(11). By 1851, he had altered the title to 'The Wandering Mesmerist'. This poem later became The Scholar Gipsy.

Arnold's source was Joseph Glanvill's The Vanity of Dogmatizing, (1661), (12), in which Glanvill said: "That one man should be able to bind the thoughts of another... will be reckon'd in the first rank of Impossible: Yet by the power of advanc'd Imagination it may very probably be effected...", (p. 195).

Glanvill's concept therefore in fact presupposed the notion of mesmeric 'rapport' and the ability of the mesmerist to control the subject. It is therefore the sense of imaginative power and its ability to influence others that Arnold sees as an anticipation of mesmeric power.

J.P. Curgenven maintains, speaking of the magical element in the poem: "in Glanvill ... it occurs in attestation of the practice of mesmerism, being introduced thus..."(13). The point is, however, that when Glanvill wrote in 1661, although there were theories of magnetism under discussion, Mesmerism as such did not exist. Arnold is in fact using Glanvill's idea of power over others through the Imagination which he, Arnold, perhaps regarded as the basis of the power which the mesmerists of his own age had over their subjects: the gypsies,

"... had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will...",
(l. 45-47)

and the Scholar-gipsy joins them "To learn strange arts", (l. 135)

However, it is made clear in the poem that the scholar is doing more than merely adopting the gipsy life-style. His joining of the gipsy-community implies an entry into the world of vision, of imagination, of transcendence - in contrast with the corruption and destructiveness of

modern 'civilised' society. The state of this society is described as one of "sick fatigue", and "languid doubt", (l. 164), where men are a prey to,

"... this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its individed aims..." (l. 203-204).

As regards Mesmerism, Tinker and Lowry say:

"The supernatural element is ... reduced to a minimum," and, of Glanvill's narrative, ... the incident, providing an example of the power to 'heighten or control' the imagination, offers an explanation of the occurrence of the word 'mesmerist' in the earliest versions of the title. This power ... Arnold would have termed, in 1845, Mesmerism, a subject not only of widespread public interest, but of peculiar importance in the life of his mother, and in that of her friend, Miss Martineau.(14).

The Scholar Gipsy is not a poem about Mesmerism so much as one about the power of Imagination, the power preserved by primitive or 'natural' societies, the original psychic strength that sophisticated Man has lost through his modern systems and institutionalism - the power that, ideally, the mesmerists had perhaps re-discovered or re-vitalised. Because the Scholar-gipsy was aware of the implications of the power that the gipsies used spontaneously and almost unconsciously, (while the later mesmerists used it consciously), therefore he is to Arnold the 'First Mesmerist'.

(2) Robert Browning, (1812-1889): Mesmerism, (1855).

(Browning, Poetical Works, 1833-1864, ed. Ian Jack 1970, pp. 603-604).

However hostile Browning was towards Mesmerism, he nevertheless regarded the phenomenon as a suitable poetic theme. His use of Mesmerism is further surprising in its seriousness; he considers the phenomenon within the context of a love-relationship.

The poet dreams of drawing his distant lover to him by mesmeric means:-

Commanding that to advance
And inform the shape
Which has made escape
And before my countenance
Answers me glance for glance -

I, still with a gesture fit
Of my hands that best
Do my soul's behest,
Pointing the power from it,
While myself do steadfast sit -

Steadfast and still the same
On my object bent,
While the hands give vent
To my ardour and my aim
And break into very flame - (st. xi-xiii)

Osbert Burdett says that the poem describes how "the mesmerist uses his power to draw the absent woman to his side".(15). It is evident that Browning skilfully manipulates the rhythms of the verses to express the mounting intensity and expectancy of the lover. As Arthur Symonds justifiably asserts: "the intense absorption, the breathless eagerness of the mesmerist, are rendered ... by the breathless and yet measured race of the verses: fifteen stanzas succeed one another without a real pause in sense or sound."(16)

Browning's use of a contemporary subject such as Mesmerism, to symbolise the telepathic bond between the lovers was as topical as Donne's use of the compass-image in A Valediction forbidding mourning, (c. 1611), for a similar end. It is possible that Browning's concept of a telepathic mesmeric link between two lovers had been influenced by similar incidents in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, (1847), in which Rochester telepathically calls Jane and draws her to him, (Chapter 35), and in Defoe's Moll Flanders,

(1723), in which Moll similarly summons her third husband, Jemmy.

The most interesting factor, however, is that in Mesmerism one again sees the mesmeric theme used in terms of the sexual mastery of a man over a woman, though not in a sinister sense.

Browning's Mesmerism was the direct inspiration of a poem by Ezra Pound, (1885-1972), also entitled Mesmerism. The work is a tribute to Browning's 'influence' upon Pound, in which the poet addresses Browning:

Aye you're a man that! ye old mesmerizer
Tyin' your meanin' in seventy swadelin's...,(17)

However, the concern of the poem is not primarily Mesmerism but the praise of the earlier poet:

Heart that was big as the bowels of Vesuvius,
Words that were wing'd as her sparks in eruption, (st.4).

As G. Robert Strange indicates, the poem illustrates that "Pound immersed himself in the idiom of Browning." (18).

of this man over Caroline's...
and Julian Symonds, used...
weight (21).

In The Hound in White,...
Anne Catherine is, indeed, the...
Graven:

There, in the shadow of the...
if it had that power, that...
never - and the flame...
to rest in white...
her head pointing to the...
(The Hound in White, p. 2)

If it is indeed true that...
evil mesmerist was fictional...
subject of Anne Catherine...
noted that that interested...
subject of a woman by a man.

In The Mesmerist, (1868),...
...mesmerist directly

- (3) Wilkie Collins, (1824-1889): The Woman in White, (1859-60), and The Moonstone, (1868).

(The Woman in White, Penguin edtn., intro. J. Symons, 1974; The Moonstone, Penguin edtn., intro. J.I.M. Stewart, 1966)

The original character on whom Collins is thought to have based his Woman in White, was Caroline Graves, one of Collins' two mistresses, the mother of his daughter Lizzie, with whom he was living at the time of his death.

The dramatic first encounter between Collins and Caroline Graves is described as follows by Robert Lee Wolff, who says of Collins:

He and some friends, walking home late one night through North London, heard the piercing scream of a 'young and very beautiful woman dressed in flowing white robes that shone in the moon-light,' who rushed out of a villa and 'seemed to float rather than to run' toward them, and 'paused ... in an attitude of supplication and terror.' He pursued her, and discovered she had been kept a prisoner under hypnotic influence by a wicked man... Collins took her as his mistress ... The dramatic first appearance of Caroline Graves ... inspired The Woman in White.(19).

The original account of these events, (20), described the influences of this man over Caroline as 'mesmeric'. J.I.M. Stewart, Clyde K. Hyder, and Julian Symons, unanimously agree that the man's power was mesmeric in origin.(21).

In The Woman in White, Walter Hartright's initial encounter with Anne Catherick is, indeed, not unlike Collins' first meeting with Caroline Graves:

There, in the middle of the broad, bright high-road - there, as if it had that moment sprung out of the earth or dropped from the heaven - stood the figure of a solitary Woman, dressed from head to foot in white garments, her face bent in grave inquiry on mine, her head pointing to the dark cloud over London, as I faced her, (The Woman in White, p. 47).

If it is indeed true that the relationship between Caroline and the evil mesmerist was fictionalised by Collins in The Woman in White as the subjection of Anne Catherick - and of Laura Fairlie - it is again to be noted that what interested Collins was the possibility of the mesmeric subjection of a woman by a man.

In The Moonstone, (1868), Collins introduced Mesmerism directly

into the narrative: we encounter the three Indians who have come to Lady Verinder's house to steal the Moonstone, with their boy, a waif reputedly gifted with clairvoyant powers. As Franklin Blake approaches the house intending to deliver the diamond to his cousin Rachel Verinder, (under the terms of the will of their uncle, Colonel John Herncastle), the Indians mesmerise the boy to discover whether or not Blake has the jewel in his possession: "The Indian - first touching the boy's head, and making signs over it in the air - then said, 'Look'. The boy became quite stiff, and stood like a statue," (The Moonstone, p. 50).

Later, Mr. Murthwaite, a famous traveller from India, tells Matthew Bruff:

The clairvoyance in this case is simply a development of the romantic side of the Indian character... Their boy is unquestionably a sensitive subject to the mesmeric influence - and, under that influence, he has no doubt reflected what was already in the mind of the person mesmerising him ... We have nothing whatever to do with clairvoyance, or with mesmerism..., (p. 332).

Ezra Jennings eventually accounts for the theft of the diamond by Franklin Blake's having taken it while in an opium-induced trance accentuated by his sudden termination of habitual smoking. To prove this, Jennings conducts his experiment, hoping that, when drugged again, Blake will recall where he originally deposited the jewel.

Jennings cites various authorities to suggest his theory of a memory interred in the sub-conscious mind being stirred by the influence of stimulants such as opium. Among these medical authorities is Dr. Elliotson, the leader of Mesmerism in England. Collins makes Jennings quote from Elliotson's Human Physiology, (1840), and Jennings refers to Elliotson as "one of the greatest of English physiologists," (p. 50).

Finally, Collins also presents in the novel the conventional hostility towards Mesmerism: Mr. Bruff rebukes Jennings for his proposed experiment on Blake, calling it, "a piece of trickery, akin to the trickery of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and the like," (p. 452).

The main significance of Collins' uses of Mesmerism in The Moonstone, apart from the reference to Elliotson, lies in its association not so much

with European culture as with India and the Orient.(22). This is imilar in its evocation of the cultural strangeness and romantic nature of Mesmerism to Arnold's association of the phenonmenon with the romany people, and Lytton's notion of its connection with spiritism, soul-lessness and elixirs.

Now the work could have ended had Dickens lived to complete it. It is not my present concern to attempt an assessment of a likely ending to the novel, but to try to determine whether or not the 'uplift' of the work, John Jasper, is a necromancer.

In view of Dickens' great interest in Mesmerism, it is strange that he never seems to have explored the phenomena in his novels prior to *Great Expectations*. - if, indeed, he does so there. Unsurprisingly, his works have frequent references to phrenology.(23).

The novel has frequently had bizarre associations. For example, the 'loyal Dickensian' notes of one attempt to summarize its ending as the work: "The third completion was by the spirit of Charles Dickens through a medium, and all that can be said of it is that 'I hope that some good to places pretty badly together or separated in the real world.'"(24).

The work certainly has a dark, gothic quality, with its theme of opium and its 'Gothic' setting. It has a 'Gothic' atmosphere, the crypts, and graveyards of Clarendon, (pp. 112-113); its discussion of ghosts, (pp. 52, 153 and 154); its 'Gothic' atmosphere is character. (e.g., the scene of the 'Gothic' atmosphere, p. 40; Rose is described as an "apparition", p. 112; the 'Gothic' atmosphere is described as a "legendary ghost of a Dowager", p. 112; the 'Gothic' atmosphere is described as a "Gothic", p. 151; Rose is a "Gothic" atmosphere, p. 151). The novel also has certain affiliations with *Macbeth*, which is a significant factor in view of the play being, "the darkest and the most terrible of all Shakespeare's plays."(25).

Certainly Jasper is a sinister, evil, and a necromancer. But is he a

(4) Dickens, (1812-1870): The Mystery of Edwin Drood, (1870).

(Penguin edtn., 1974, intro Angus Wilson).

As an unfinished, 'mystery' novel, Edwin Drood has naturally attracted considerable attention. In particular there has been much discussion of how the work would have ended had Dickens lived to complete it. It is not my present concern to attempt an assessment of a likely ending to the novel, but to try to determine whether or not the 'villain' of the work, John Jasper, is a mesmerist.

In view of Dickens' great interest in Mesmerism, it is strange that he never seems to have explored the phenomenon in his novels prior to Edwin Drood - if, indeed, he does so there. Contrastingly, his works have frequent references to phrenology.(23).

The novel has frequently had bizarre associations. For example, the 'Loyal Dickensian' notes of one attempt to construct an ending to the work: "The third completion was by the spirit pen of Charles Dickens through a medium, and all that can be said of this is that Dickens must have gone to pieces pretty badly directly he arrived in the spirit world."(24).

The work certainly has strange and eerie qualities, with its theme of opium and its 'Gothic' setting among the crumbling antiquities, the crypts, and graveyards of Cloisterham, (see esp. pp. 51-52 and 117); its discussions of ghosts, (pp. 52, 153 and 161). Much of the imagery is supernatural in character, (e.g., the rooks have an "occult importance," p. 40; Rosa is described as an "apparition", p. 54; Mrs. Tisher is likened to "the legendary ghost of a Dowager", p. 57; Jasper is a "ghost", p. 95; Durdles a "Ghoule", p. 151; Rosa a "sweet witch", p. 229). The novel also has certain affiliations with Macbeth, which Angus Wilson regards as significant in view of the play being, "the darkest, most murderous, of all Shakespeare's plays."(25).

Certainly Jasper is a sinister, even an evil character. But is he a mesmerist? Critical opinion varies. W. Robertson Nicholl says: "The literary

men of Dickens' period were much interested in the action of drugs, in Mesmerism, and the like... Dickens plainly implies that Crisparkle went to the weir because Jasper willed him to do so, " (p. 117).

In fact the evidence for this assertion is weak: Crisparkle may be acting on a clairvoyant intuition, (pp. 197-198), and the circumstances of his going to the weir are indeed strange. However, there is little to suggest that Jasper willed him to the weir. The main point, however, is that even if Jasper did do so, this does not make him a 'mesmerist'.

Angus Wilson says of Jasper: "Much has been written about the nature of his evil. Certainly mesmerism would seem to be part of his evil powers..," (p. 27).

It is my view that, if Jasper is a mesmerist, then he is so only by implication. We have no information about his being a practising mesmerist in the novel, actually making mesmeric passes and magnetizing subjects, as Svengali does in Trilby. In the case of Edwin Drood it is striking that Jasper's opium-addiction is made far more explicit than his 'Mesmerism'. Jasper is a sinister character, whom one would describe as a 'hypnotic' personality. No doubt his role as a figure of sinister power was inspired by Dickens' great knowledge of Mesmerism, and Dickens' realisation of its potential as an instrument of evil. However, although the source of Jasper's power may well be implicitly mesmeric, to consider him a practising mesmerist like Spencer Hall, H.G. Atkinson or Dr. Elliotson - or for that matter like Svengali - is quite without foundation.

Jasper is a sinister figure living in a sombre, shadowy setting, (p. 43) he experiences fits and dazes, (pp. 41, 168 and 192); his stare is intent, intense and powerful, (p. 44); he can become rigid, like a mesmerised subject, (p. 47), and sometimes he has a mysterious 'film' over his eyes, (pp. 47 and 95). Rosa, more importantly, is terrified of him. She says: "He terrifies me. He haunts my thoughts ... He has made a slave of me with his looks... I avoid his eyes, but he forces me to see them without looking at them," (p. 95).

Jasper is uncannily able to echo the words of others without previous knowledge of them, (p. 105); he has "presentiments of evil", (p. 132); his sinister aspect is accentuated by his deathly "white lips", (p. 118), and his morbid black scarf, (pp. 180 and 182); he looks at Neville with "a sense of destructive power", (p. 152). Even the unsuspecting Edwin is alarmed by him, (p. 168).

On the night of Edwin's mysterious disappearance, Jasper is at his most energetic, (pp. 182-183), and the evil in the atmosphere of which he is a part is paralleled by the stormy weather.(26). It is significant too that the night is Christmas Eve, and that the Cathedral, (perhaps at this point a symbol of Christian goodness) is damaged, implying some triumph of Evil of which Jasper is the focal entity.

In Chapter 19, the 'wooing' episode, we see Jasper's evil and his sinister powers, most fully. We read of Rosa:

The moment she sees him from the porch, leaning on the sun-dial, the old horrible feeling of being compelled by him asserts its hold upon her. She feels that she would even then go back, but that he draws her feet towards him. She cannot resist..,(p. 226),

and at the same time, on the other hand, Jasper's "face looks so wicked and menacing", (p. 228). Rosa calls Jasper, "a bad, bad man," (p. 228), and she says of his assumption of Neville's guilt: "your belief... is not Mr. Crisparkle's belief, and he is a good man", (p. 230, my emphasis).

Jasper's profession of love is violent: "his convulsive hands absolutely diabolical," (p. 229), and he tells Rosa that if ^{she leaves} she will force him to "do more harm than can ever be undone", (p. 229). He becomes increasingly impassioned: "the frightful vehemence of the man ... so additionally terrifies her as to break the spell that has held her to the spot", (p. 231). Rosa vows that "she must fly from this terrible man", who is described as "her odious suitor", (p. 233). Her fear of his evil is remarkable in its intensity: "the feeling of not being safe from him, and of the solid walls of the old convent being powerless to keep out his ghostly following of her", (p. 233); "she felt as if he had power to bind her by a spell", (p. 234). She is even repulsed by the sun-dial on which

he had leaned, which "made her shrink from it, as though he had invested it with some awful quality from his own nature", (p. 234). Rosa declares: "I shudder with horror of him", (p. 236), while Helena says to Rosa: "I would sooner see you dead at his wicked feet", than married to him, (p. 252).

Jasper's position as an individual alienated by and from 'normal' society is emphasised. He "lived apart from human life, constantly exercising an Art which brought him into mechanical harmony with others", and yet, "the spirit of the man was in moral accordance or interchange with nothing around him", (p. 264). His menacing presence is worsened by his hypocrisy: he is a member of the Church, devoted to its liturgy.

Jasper, then, is sinister and evil, hypnotic and powerful by nature, and inducing horror in Rosa. Does this, however, necessarily make him a mesmerist? There are two possible indications that support the hypothesis of Jasper's positive Mesmerism: one is his rejection of orthodox medicine, ("I don't love doctors, or doctors' stuff", p. 43), and the other is the reference to Animal Magnetism: "As, in some cases of drunkenness, and in others of animal magnetism, there are two states of consciousness which never clash ... so Miss Twinkleton has two distinct and separate phases of being", (p. 53).

Felix Aylmer notes the reference to Animal Magnetism, and comments on critical opinion which has deduced from it that "the confession mentioned by Forster was to be extracted from Jasper under hypnotism." (27). Aylmer shrewdly observes: "A popular view holds that Jasper is practising hypnotism upon Rosa. Animal Magnetism no doubt it is, but only that variety normally induced by nature between the sexes," (p. 114). Aylmer explains Rosa's hysteria and horror of Jasper not as indications of her repulsion from his evil, occult presence, but in terms of her realisation that, as her future husband's guardian, Jasper's advances are highly improper. Moreover, she is a product of the social conditioning of her age, has doubtless been brought up in the all-female company of Miss Twinkleton's

academy to fear any male advances, and is naturally overwhelmed by the degree and intensity of Jasper's passion. Contrastingly, we should note her earlier encounters with Edwin, which occur in the watchful presence of Miss Twinkleton, and are entirely lacking in passion of the nature of Jasper's ardour.

Clearly, therefore, Jasper is not a practising mesmerist engaged in magnetizing subjects. He certainly, however, has a 'hypnotic' nature which may be linked to some secret mesmeric activity, but if so then this mesmeric involvement is entirely implicit and is significantly far more vague than Jasper's opium involvements.

It seems that, in the character of John Jasper, Dickens was not attempting to portray a mesmerist so much as a sinister character with a powerful personality possessing influential qualities that Dickens had himself observed as the potentially dangerous aspects of a mesmerist's ability to control the actions of a mesmerised subject.

(5) George du Maurier, (1834-1896): Trilby, (1894).

(Everyman edtn., 1969).

Du Maurier's Trilby contrasts with Edwin Drood in that the mesmeric theme is explicit, fully identified and defined.

In his artistic work, du Maurier illustrated two thriller stories with mesmero-hypnotic themes, for Once a Week. They were The Notting Hill Mystery, (1862), and The Poisoned Mind, by 'A.G.G', (Vol. 5, Dec. 21st, 1861).

The latter was by far the more important for present purposes, having thematic resemblances to du Maurier's own novel. The story described a sinister foreigner who, having lost the woman whom he loved to a scientist, vows revenge. He hypnotises her and induces her to conduct scientific experiments. Afterwards, when she was no longer in hypnotic trance, she could not explain what she had done to her husband who, desperately anxious to obtain further information from her, finally murders her. Thus the evil hypnotist triumphs in his revenge. Leonée Ormond describes the story as "a crude sensation tale." (28).

Although not written until towards the end of du Maurier's life, and published in 1894, Trilby is set in the 1850's and 1860's, and is therefore very much of the 'mesmeric mania' period, (pp. 81, 103, 137 and 192 contain references to these earlier decades). The explicit mesmeric theme enables Leonée Ormond to state categorically that the novel concerns "mesmeric influence," (Ormond, p. 441), that it is "about a French grisette, and her hypnotist lover", that he, "releases her talent by means of hypnotism", and that, "her voice was entirely the result of mesmerism", (p. 443).

Svengali is a melodramatic villain. Ormond says that he has "the characteristics of a classic villain", (Ormond, p. 449). He is of strange obscure origin, (Polish, German, Jewish), and his appearance is profoundly menacing: he is described as "well featured but sinister", (p. 8); he "flashed a pair of languishing black eyes at her with intent to kill", (p. 15); we read that, "a very ugly gleam yellowed the tawny black of

Svengali's big eyes", (p. 18), and that he was "flashing his languid bold eyes with a sickly smile from one listener to another", (p. 36). The narrator observes - perhaps tritely - that Svengali "was not a nice man", (p. 44), and we learn that his character is base, that he is egotistical, cynical, dirty, (p. 44), that he cheated people, betrayed, exploited and mocked them, (p. 45).

Again, melodramtically, "he was absolutely without voice, beyond the harsh, hoarse, weak raven's croak", (p. 45), but his musical genius is indisputable. With regard to melodies, "there was nothing so humble, so base even, but what his magic could transform it into the rarest beauty", (p. 45).

The account of his relationship with his pupil, Honorine Cohen, is disturbing because it reveals the evil in Svengali:

She went to see him in his garret, and he played to her, and leered and ogled, and flashed his bold, black beady Jew's eyes into her, and she straightway mentally prostrated herself in reverence and adoration before this dazzling specimen of her race, (p. 47).

Honorine loved Svengali, but he abused and ill-treated her. The worse he treated her, the more she loved him, until he threw her out into the gutter, having destroyed even her ability to sing.

It is interesting to note the parallel that both Trilby and Honorine were musical pupils of Svengali, just as Rosa was Jasper's music pupil in Edwin Drood.

This, then, constitutes Svengali's evil, his hypocrisy, and so on. But his role as a fully-practising mesmerist is quite explicit. Du Maurier relates at great length the scene in which Svengali mesmerises Trilby. Trilby is suffering from neuralgia:

Svengali told her to sit down on the divan, and sat opposite to her, and bade her look him well in the white of the eyes... Then he made little passes and counterpasses on her forehead and temples and down her cheek and neck. Soon her eyes closed and her face grew placid, (p. 54).

In this state, Trilby is unable to move without Svengali's permission, but when she awakens from her trance, all her pain has gone. Svengali

says: "I have got it myself; it is in my elbows... I will cure you and take your pain myself", (pp. 54-55), and:

When your pain arrives, then shall you come once more to Svengali, and he shall take it away from you, and keep it himself for a souvenir of you when you are gone.. And you shall see nothing, hear nothing, think of nothing, but Svengali, Svengali, Svengali! (p. 57).

This is Mesmerism at its most evil. Du Maurier is illustrating the extreme, logical conclusion to which the relationship between mesmerist and subject could, in theory, be taken. What impresses the reader is not that Svengali has benevolently removed Trilby's pain, but that he has taken advantage of it to gain mastery over her, to shackle her in an obsession to himself, to subject her to his will, destroying her freedom and individuality.

To stress the sense of evil in what has occurred, du Maurier causes the paternal, good-natured Laird to rebuke Trilby severely. The Laird says:

I'd sooner have any pain than have it cured in that unnatural way... He mesmerised you; that's what it is - mesmerism! They get you into their power, and just make you do any blessed thing they please - lie, murder, steal - anything! and kill yourself into the bargain when they've done with you! It's just too terrible to think of! (p. 58).

Trilby is deeply impressed by this:

... she was haunted by the memory of Svengali's big eyes and the touch of his soft, dirty finger-tips on her face; and her fear and repulsion grew together. And 'Svengali, Svengali, Svengali!' went ringing in her head and ears till it became an obsession, a dirge, a knell, an unendurable burden, almost as hard to bear as the pain in her eyes, (p. 58).

Taffy obstructs Svengali's later attempts to mesmerise Trilby, (pp. 83-84), and Svengali comes to have "a wholesome dread" of Taffy, (p. 86).

But the reader is not allowed to sympathise with Svengali. His sheer viciousness is stressed: "always ready to vex, frighten, bully or torment anybody or anything smaller and weaker than himself..," (p. 88). We read of "his hoarse, rasping, nasal, throaty rook's caw, his big yellow teeth baring themselves in a mongrel canine snarl, his heavy upper eyelids drooping over his insolent black eyes," (pp. 105-106). Thus he is virtually a caricature of the melodramatic villain. To Trilby, "he seemed ... a dread,

powerful demon... like an incubus", (p. 106).

After Mrs. Bagot's successful destruction of the engagement between Trilby and Little Billie, Trilby disappears for several years until her re-appearance as La Svengali, a universally acclaimed opera star. In her earlier days she had been quite unable to sing, and Taffy, the Laird and Little Billie are mystified by the beauty of her voice now. The significance of what has happened to Trilby lies in the fact that her mesmeric subjection by Svengali has resulted, finally, in her complete loss of individual personality; she is now merely a projection of her mesmerist's ego: "It was as if she said - 'See! what does the composer count for?... For I am Svengali, and you shall hear nothing, see nothing, think of nothing, but Svengali, Svengali, Svengali..." (p. 251).

That her voice is due purely to mesmeric influence is clear when she is unable to sing at all without Svengali conducting her, (he is prevented from doing so by ill-health). When he dies of a heart attack at the opera, the spell is broken and Trilby is at last freed, (p. 296).

Trilby herself dies when she is later shown a photograph of Svengali, the eyes of his portrait hypnotising her, (pp. 336-340). Billie comments on her death as "just as if he were calling her from the tomb!" (p. 343).

Gecko explains the origin of the mesmerically-produced voice: "Svengali was a demon, a magician!" (p. 352). It was he who taught Trilby to sing: "She could keep on one note and make it go through all the colours in the rainbow - according to the way Svengali looked at her," (p. 355). Gecko explains that there were two Trilbys - the 'normal', the lover of Billie; and the singer, the slave of Svengali:

... with one wave of his hand over her - with one look of his eye... Svengali could turn her into the other Trilby, his Trilby - and make her do whatever he liked. You might have run a red hot needle into her and she would not have felt it ... Trilby was just ... a voice, and nothing more - just the unconscious voice that Svengali sang with, (pp. 356-357).

Du Maurier's novel obviously fails in 'realistic' terms: Svengali is too melodramatically evil to be taken as genuine characterisation. The

novel seems to attempt more an exploration of the theme of power, of individual power through Mesmerism, than a portrayal of convincing characters.

Svengali, unlike John Jasper, is a bona fide mesmerist, and it is interesting that du Maurier was not concerned so much to portray an actual mesmerist from real life, like Dr. Elliotson or Hall, but to make of the mesmerist an epitome of evil, and to demonstrate the extraordinarily evil potential that, theoretically, underlay the mesmerist/subject relationship, in its destruction of individuality and its threat to personal freedom.

(6) Thomas Hood, (1799-1845): Animal Magnetism

(The Works of Thomas Hood, ed. by his son and daughter, 1870, ii, pp. 452-463).

Thomas Hood demonstrated to the full his ability as a humourist and satirist when he wrote his essay Animal Magnetism.

The first part of the essay, is openly mocking in its derision of Mesmerism, which it blames for having 'intoxicated' the age: "respectable parties, scientific men, and even physicians, have notoriously frequented the bar", (p. 453), emerging in a drunken state.

Hood mocked the absurd claims of mesmeric clairvoyance, (p. 454), calling Mesmerism, "a pernicious narcotic ... the effect of which is to undermine the reason of its votaries, and rob them of their common senses", (p. 455). In consequence he called for 'Temperance' societies to protect the nation from mesmeric 'intoxication', referring to the "Devil's Elixirs of the Mesmerian Distillery", (ibid.).

The second section of the essay consists of two ridiculous letters exchanged between Reuben Oxenham and his nephew Robert Holland. Oxenham, a Lincolnshire grazier and country 'bumpkin', asks Holland to tell him what animal magnetizing might be: is it perhaps a new breed of species produced by the landed aristocracy? (p. 456).

Holland's reply, from the sophisticated capital, (he is a linen draper of Tottenham Court Road), denounces Mesmerism uncompromisingly. To him, it is "all of a piece with juggling, quacksalving, and mountebanking ... one of the principal tricks is sending people off to sleep against their wills", (p. 458).

Holland ridicules "an outlandish Count", a foreigner, and his somnambule, an actress-type named Miss Charlotte Ann Elizabeth Martin, (p. 458). For example, the foreign mesmerist claims a great triumph when his somnambule, entranced, is able to read a cookery book without looking, and detects the words 'ROST HAIR', (i.e. Roast Hare), (p. 460). Holland caustically observes that one is far more likely to be correct reading something

when conscious, than when 'entranced'; and he concludes: "to my mind it is all sham Abraham", (p. 462). He cites the story of a farmer who was gulled into believing 'Animal Magnifying' to be a "new, cheap and quick way of fattening cattle", (ibid), and his postscript contains a conversation that he has had with a vet who said: "It is all very well for the old men and women physicians, but won't go down with the Horse doctors", (ibid).

It is obvious that there are several contemporary jibes and allusions here which, with the passage of time, are not easy to interpret. For example, one of the landed aristocrats to whom Reuben Oxenham refers is called "Lord Spenser", (p. 456). This is possibly a reference to Herbert Spencer, of whom R.K. Webb says: "It is worth noting that the greatest exponent of Victorian amateur presumption, Herbert Spencer, made some of his earliest appearances in print in the Zoist," (R.K. Webb, p. 245). The identity of 'Robert Holland' is possibly Sir Henry Holland, (1788-1873), an eminent physician who was appointed physician extraordinary to Queen Victoria in 1837. Just as Robert Holland's attitude towards Mesmerism is dismissive, so Sir Henry Holland was renowned for his cautious attitude to all scientific discoveries. With reference to the need felt that mesmerists should subject their phenomenon to ruthless experimentation and analysis, R.K. Webb says of Sir Henry Holland: "he noted as a major change in his lifetime the boldness of modern scientific hypotheses, but with it an increasing insistence on rigorous proof", (R.K. Webb, p. 245).

It is possible to see many 'originals' as the basis of Hood's foreign mesmerist, a Count. There were a number of continental aristocrats noted for their mesmeric beliefs and practices, including the French Baron Dupotet, a friend and colleague of Dr. Elliotson, and author of An Introduction to the Study of Animal Magnetism, (1838); the Marquis de Puysegur, author of Du Magnétisme Animal, Paris, (1807), Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire et à l'établissement du magnétisme animal, Paris, (1784), and Recherches... sur l'homme... dans le somnambulisme provoqué par l'acte magnétique, (Paris) 1811; Baron Reichenbach, a German and author of numerous works concerned with

magnetism, and the Hungarian Count Szpary.(29).

As for the Count's disreputable actress-somnambule, Charlotte Ann Elizabeth Martin, it is tempting to see this character as a jibe at Charlotte Elizabeth, the highly respectable writer who was opposed to Mesmerism and sharply critical of Harriet Martineau's 'cure', (see Chapter 3).

However, this speculation cannot be supported; neither can one interpret the reference in Holland's letter to his benevolent dead aunt, (p. 457), as a reference to the socially-minded Harriet Martineau. Again, the reference to women physicians and horse doctors seem at first sight to be definite jibes at Harriet's claims for having cured her cow Ailsie by Mesmerism, (see Chapter 4); but Hood died in 1845, and his essay in any case certainly pre-dates Harriet's 'cure', because the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend referred to Hood's essay in Facts in Mesmerism, the publication of which pre-dated the 'cure' of 1844. Townshend wrote of Hood's satire: "no malice enters on what he calls somnamboozelism", (p. 37).

Hood's essay is amusingly satiric, and one can only conclude, since the close parallels to Harriet Martineau's case and her subsequent activities cannot possibly be more than mere coincidence, that the references made by Hood were at least understood by contemporary readers, and that their meaning and relevance have been lost with the passage of time.

(7) Bulwer Lytton, (1803-1873): A Strange Story, (1862).

(All the Year Round, Vol. 5, p. 460 following;
Vol. 6, p. 26 following. The change in volume number
is indicated in the text).

A Strange Story is complex in its handling of mesmeric themes, and unusual in that the chief exponent of Mesmerism in the novel, Sir Philip Derval, is motivated by goodness. However, the less-scrupulous mesmerist, Dr. Lloyd, is by no means the most evil character. On the contrary, the villain, Margrave, does not practise Mesmerism explicitly, but is certainly involved in alchemy and magic, and also stands in the role of the traditional mesmerist, as the sinister subjector of the innocent heroine - Lilian Ashleigh.

The novel concerns two rival doctors, Lloyd, and Allen Fenwick, the narrator. A controversy breaks out between them concerning Mesmerism, of which Dr. Lloyd is an exponent: "... he became a disciple rather of Puysegur than Mesmer (for Mesmer had little faith in that gift of clairvoyance of which Puysegur was, I believe, the first audacious asserter)", (All the Year Round, Vol. 5, p. 460). Dr. Lloyd conducts mesmeric cures, (p. 460), and is furious when Fenwick writes a pamphlet-attack on his activities. Lloyd suddenly becomes ill, (p. 461), and, cursing Fenwick, dies, (p. 462).

Dr. Lloyd's friend, Mr. Vigors, arranges for a young heiress, Lilian Ashleigh, and her mother, to occupy Lloyd's former residence. Fenwick is sharply critical of Vigors, an exponent of electro-biology, a form of early hypnotism in which the entranced state was induced by forcing the subject to stare intently at a small metal disc. Fenwick says of Vigors:

Electro-biology was very naturally the special entertainment of a man whom no intercourse ever pleased in which his will was not imposed upon others. Therefore he only invited to his table persons whom he could stare into the abnegation of their senses, willing to say that beef was lamb, or brandy was coffee, according as he willed them to say, (p. 482).

Fenwick falls deeply in love with Lilian Ashleigh, (p. 483), and when she is taken ill with a mysterious seizure, he is assisted by his friend, Mrs. Poyntz, in being appointed to tend her. However, Vigors, displeased at this, forces Mrs. Ashleigh to dismiss Fenwick, (p. 532),

and to employ a new physician, Dr. Jones, a mesmerist.

Fenwick is convinced that Lilian's malady is not physiological, and his fears are increased by Mrs. Poyntz, who informs him that:

Prior to Mrs. Ashleigh's migration to L--, Mr. Vigors had interested her in the pretended phenomena of mesmerism. He had consulted a clairvoyante ... as to Lilian's health, and the clairvoyante had declared her to be... disposed to consumption. Mr. Vigors persuaded Mrs. Ashleigh to come at once with him and see this clairvoyante herself, armed with a lock of Lilian's hair and a glove she had worn, as the media of mesmeric rapport, (p. 554).

The clairvoyante had declared that Fenwick should be dismissed, and that, "the best remedy of all would be mesmerism. But since Dr. Lloyd's death, she did not know of a mesmerist, sufficiently gifted, in affinity with the patient", (ibid), and it was then that Vigors had secured Dr. Jones' appointment.

Fenwick and Mrs. Poyntz discuss the recent 'mesmeric craze' that had occurred in the district, Abbey Hill, during Dr. Lloyd's lifetime. Fenwick says of Mrs. Poyntz opposition on that occasion: "Your strong intellect detected at once the absurdity of the whole pretence - the falsity of mesmerism - the impossibility of clairvoyance", (pp. 554-555), to which Mrs. Poyntz returns:

No ... I do not know whether mesmerism be false or clairvoyance impossible, and I don't wish to know. All I do know is, that I saw the Hill in great danger, young ladies allowing themselves to be put to sleep by gentlemen, and pretending they had no will against such fascination! Improper and shocking! (p. 555).

Mrs. Poyntz persuades Mrs. Ashleigh to re-appoint Fenwick as Lilian's physician. Under his care, she recovers, and he wins her love, but he loses sight of her when she and her mother remove to Brighton, (p. 602).

Fenwick meets Margrave, a new-comer with considerable scientific knowledge, (All the Year Round, Vol. 6, p. 26). Margrave is strange and temperamental. He viciously kills a squirrel which bites him, but then instantly regains his previous calm, (p. 28), and he is cruel to a lame child, but then immediately regains his benevolent manner, (p. 50). He is obsessed with youthfulness, looking younger than his age, (p. 49), and preferring the company of children to adults, (p. 52).

Fenwick discovers that Margrave is seeking the 'elixir of life', hence his obsession with youthfulness, (p. 76). Meeting Sir Philip Derval, an occultist, Fenwick immediately warms to him, (p. 98), though he is astonished to learn that he, too, is a mesmerist, (p. 100). Sir Philip offers to prove that he can mesmerise Fenwick, and the latter agrees to take part in an experiment. Sir Philip tells him that an Arab girl clairvoyant informed him, Sir Philip, that Margrave had murdered Sir Philip's friend, the eastern occultist Haroun of Aleppo, (p. 101).

Sir Philip traps Margrave, mesmerises him and then mesmerises Fenwick too. Fenwick is now able to see into Margrave and to perceive that he quite literally has no soul, (pp. 121-123). Afterwards, Margrave does not recall having been mesmerised.

Sir Philip and Fenwick have a foolish quarrel concerning the truth of occult phenomena, sorcery in particular, and part on bad terms, (p. 146). Fenwick is appalled later to find the body of Sir Philip, who has been murdered.

Fenwick, convinced that Margrave killed Sir Philip, (p. 172), discovers from the dead man's journal that Haroun of Aleppo had been in possession of the elixir of life, in quest for which Margrave had obviously murdered him, (p. 194).

Lilian Ashleigh returns, and Fenwick is alarmed to find that her affection for him is being destroyed, and that she is becoming increasingly awed, though also repelled, by Margrave, (p. 246). Mrs. Ashleigh informs Fenwick that Lilian is under Margrave's influence, (p. 265), and she adds that Margrave's power may well be of mesmeric origin, although she observes:

"I know how much you disbelieve in the stories of animal-magnetism and eletro-biology..." Fenwick asks her: "You think that Margrave exercises some power of that kind over Lilian? He did not offer to try any of those arts practised by professional mesmerists and other charlatans?"

Mrs. Ashleigh replies: "I thought he was about to do so, but I forestalled him," and she adds that she too had felt: "as if something constrained me against my will, as if, in short, I were under that influence which Mr. Vigors... would ascribe to mesmerism, (p. 266).

Assisted by a benign Christian physician and phrenologist, Dr. Julius Faber, (p. 289), Fenwick prepares to do battle with Margrave. Lilian suddenly disappears, (p. 317), and Fenwick traces her to Margrave, whom he overpowers by gaining possession of his magic wand. He finds Lilian, restores her to health, (at which point she can no longer recall her previous loss of affection for Fenwick), and they marry and join Faber in Australia, (p. 385). There, Faber and Fenwick discuss Mesmerism. Faber says: "Honour to those who, like our bold contemporary, Elliotson, have braved scoff and sacrificed dress in seeking to extract what is practical in uses", (p. 412).

As with Sir Philip, Fenwick is taken aback to learn that Faber, too, believes in Mesmerism: "What! Do I understand you? Is it you, Julius Faber, who attach faith to the wonders ascribed to animal magnetism?" (p. 412).

However, after listening to Faber, Fenwick agrees that Margrave is able to influence people with his wand just "as mesmerists pretend that some substance mesmerised by them can act on the patient as sensibly as if it were the mesmerist himself", (p. 416).

Lilian ails again, and it is clear that Margrave is affecting her once more, (p. 435). They return to England, where Margrave, dying, comes to Fenwick and begs him to concoct the elixir for him. Fenwick, realising that Lilian's fate is bound to that of Margrave, agrees. He fears, "Could Lilian be affected by the near neighbourhood of one to whose magnetic influence she had once been so strangely subjected?" (p. 459).

Fenwick prepares the elixir, (p. 530), but cosmic forces intervene, striving against Margrave, who is unable to take the potion, and dies, (p. 555). Lilian is now freed at last from Margrave's influence.

The rambling and, at times, disjointed nature of Lytton's novel is possibly due to its original appearance as a periodical serial. However, it is evident too that Lytton aspired to an extraordinarily extensive aim in the work, introducing many different varieties of occultism - mesmerism,

alchemy, magic, astrology, clairvoyance, Rosicrucianism, the concept of the soulless individual, etc. The chief interest of the novel for present purposes is its deviation from the usual mesmeric presentation of the mesmerist as an evil tyrant gaining control over the innocent heroine. Here, however, we find a variety of mesmerists and attitudes towards Mesmerism: Dr. Lloyd, a mesmerist who is neither 'good' nor 'evil'; Mr. Vigors, who has hypnotic qualities, consults mesmeric clairvoyants, and arranges for a mesmerist, Dr. Jones, to treat Lilian; Mrs. Poyntz, who neither believes nor disbelieves in Mesmerism, but deplores the thoughtless enthusiasm and gullibility of many in their response to it; Sir Philip Derval, the strongest exponent of Mesmerism, and on the 'side' of goodness; Dr. Julius Faber, a believer in the phenomenon and a supporter of Elliotson; Dr. Fenwick, who is forced to believe by the very course of events.

The villain, Margrave, may well be involved in Mesmerism, but if so then his involvement is never clearly defined. Certainly he is a hypnotic character who gains control over Lilian, and, to an extent, over Mrs. Ashleigh. However, the source of Margrave's villainy is not, as in the case of Svengali, Mesmerism, but a desire to transcend natural and divine law in seeking to obtain immortality and to become God-like, a far worse 'evil' because the degree of 'forbidden knowledge' is greater. Thus Margrave's intention - though not his stature - classifies him with Milton's Satan and Marlowe's Faustus.

Lytton uses Mesmerism as one of a number of interesting forms of occultism that provide the background to a novel the central aim of which is to explore the limits of human aspiration, beyond which Man may not proceed.

(8) Anna Savage: On Hearing Mesmerism called Impious, (1845).

(First published in Angels' Visits, 1845; version used, Rev. George Sandby: Mesmerism and its Opponents, 1848, pp. 117-118).

Anna Savage's On Hearing Mesmerism called Impious is a poem of Christian didacticism, as assertive of the Divine nature of the gift of Mesmerism as was Charlotte Elizabeth's letter in its accusations of the demonic origins of Mesmerism. Anna Savage insists:

Call not the gift unholy; 'tis a fair - a precious thing,
That God hath granted to our hands for gentlest minist'ring,
(lines 1-2).

The poem avoids excessive sentimentality by its close adherence to original Scriptural imagery, e.g. p. 117, lines 9-10, p. 118, lines 27-28, (a quotation from Acts of the Apostles, x, v. 28). Although one would not perhaps agree with the Rev. George Sandby that these are "charming lines" by a "gifted poetess", (p. 117), they are valuable in their expression of the contrary view to that of Christians violently opposed to Mesmerism. Anna Savage stresses the balming, therapeutic elements of mesmeric trance which she relates to the spiritual peace of the human soul in harmony with its God.

(9) Shelley, (1792-1822): The Magnetic Lady to her Patient, (1832).

(P.B. Shelley: Complete Poetical Works, ed. Thomas Hutchison, 1961, p. 667).

The inspiration of this poem was, as was noted in Chapter 7, Shelley's frustrated love for Jane Williams.

The concept of the 'Magnetic Lady' relates to Rosicrucianism, and therefore pre-dated Mesmer. However, as has been frequently noted in this study, theories of magnetism presupposed, and were absorbed by, Mesmerism, and the Rosicrucian tradition was no exception. As Louis Satow says, Paracelsus and Van Helmont formulated theories of personal magnetism which were brought to England, "by the philosopher and partisan of the Rosicrucians, Robert Fludd, (1574-1639)", who, "referred the ruling principles both of sympathy and antipathy to the all-powerful influence of personal magnetism."(30)

It is clear, however, that Shelley is primarily interested in the mesmeric qualities of his lady, because her use of her hands implies the characteristic, manual, mesmeric "passes". Fred Kaplan notes the mesmeric nature of the theme in Shelley's poem, which he describes as "the product of his European rather than his English experiences."(31).

What seems to interest Shelley is primarily the magnetic power of the mesmerist and the ability of the mesmerist to induce the trance of forgetfulness in the subject.

This work, too, constitutes a deviation from the usual presentation of the phenomenon; although the situation is, again, sexual, the roles are reversed in that the mesmerist is now a woman, and the subject a man.

The Magnetic Lady to her Patient describes in five stanzas the mesmerisation of the 'patient' by the lady whom he loves. Her intention is, through Mesmerism, to soothe the lover into a trance in which he will forget the pain of his impossible love. She says:

Sleep on! Sleep! forget thy pain ...
And from my fingers flow
The powers of life, and like a sign
Seal thee from thine hour of woe, (st. 1).

The lady does not, or cannot, love the poet, and so is unable to return his love, (just as Jane Williams could not return Shelley's feelings for her); but she does wish to spare him, (st. 2). The magnetic trance of sleep is induced so that he can forget the lady and the fact that she is inaccessible, (st. 3).

The final, fifth stanza describes the patient's awakening from the mesmeric trance; it has only provided temporary relief. The only permanent cure for the agony of his frustrated love is not Mesmerism, but Death itself: "'Twould kill me what would cure my pain", (l. 42).

The poem, is, therefore, a serious use of the mesmeric theme. Shelley's intention is not to satirise female mesmerists. Neither is his aim merely to use the concept of mesmeric 'power' as a symbol of the power that an inaccessible lady could be said to have over the man who loves her helplessly. Shelley rather conceives of the imaginary situation in which the literal power of Mesmerism to produce a soothing trance or sleep, is introduced into the relationship of a hopeless lover and his kind, but of necessity unresponsive, mesmerist-lady.

The explicit sexualisation of Mesmerism is found in the poem 'Mesmerism' by Adam Sedgwick, who professes to be a pupil of Dr. Mesmer. He says that he has only to throw his hands over the head of a lady to induce a trance, (p. 27).

We are later informed that the Mesmerists, and especially Dr. Mesmer, have had a strange power of inducing a trance. Dr. Mesmer says that, "they have had from the earliest times a power of inducing a trance of hypnotic quality", (p. 53).

In an old book entitled *Mesmerism and the Mesmerists* it is recorded by one Ezra Thomas that an ancestor of the famous Mesmer was a pupil of Dr. Mesmer in Paris, through whom he acquired a collection of instruments and apparatus, (p. 67).

- (10) Bram Stoker, (1847-1912): The Lair of the White Worm, (1911).
(Arrow edtn., 1974).

Bram Stoker's The Lair of the White Worm, though considerably later in date, is relevant because, like du Maurier's Trilby, it is set in an earlier period.

The events described by Stoker, the author of Dracula, (1897), take place in 1860, (p. 9). The work, though not of particular literary merit, and at times stylistically poor, is important in so far as it presents the 'classic' mesmeric situation: the attempt of an older man to subdue a young girl by mesmeric means, in an implicitly sexual sense: Lilla Watford is "a little over twenty", (p. 34), Edgar Caswall is thirty.

The Caswall family is renowned for its coldness and hardness. Sir Nathaniel de Salis says of them: "... the most remarkable characteristic is the eyes. Black, piercing, almost unendurable, they seem to contain in themselves a remarkable will power... a power impregnated with some mysterious quality, partly hypnotic, partly mesmeric..." (p. 20).

When Edgar Caswall's influence begins to be felt in the district, the reader is told that: "'God help any', was the common thought, 'who is under the domination of such a man'," (p. 31).

The explicit sexuality of Caswall's power is soon recognised by Adam Salton, who protests of Caswall: "He seems to think that he has only to throw his handkerchief to any woman and be her master", (p. 37).

We are later informed that, over the centuries, the Caswall family have had a strange power of dominating others. Sir Nathaniel De Salis says that, "they have had from the earliest times some extraordinary mesmeric or hypnotic quality", (p. 65).

In an old book entitled Mercia and its Worthies, it is recorded by one Ezra Thomas that an ancestor of the family was in fact a pupil of Dr. Mesmer in Paris, through whom he acquired a collection of instruments and apparatus, (p. 67).

When the chest containing these objects-entitled 'Mesmer's Chest' - is opened by Caswall, however, it seems to contain only some wire and glass equipment, (p. 84).

The real power of Caswall comes not from these, however, but from his personality. He makes three attempts to gain 'spiritual' mastery over Lilla Watford. These attempts are described as "mesmeric or hypnotic battle", (p. 70). Caswall is assisted by the sinister negro Oolanga, and by the snake-like Lady Arabella March. Each time, however, Lilla is saved from Caswall's domination by the 'forces of goodness' - Adam Salton, and Lilla's cousin, Mimi Watford, whom Adam eventually marries. On each occasion Mimi uses manual gestures to expel Caswall which are not unlike mesmeric 'passes', (pp. 72, 97, 166). The third attempt by Caswall to subject Lilla, however, results in her death, (p. 167).

The real Evil in the novel is not represented by Caswall, however, but by Lady Arabella March. She is the White Worm of the title, a hideous primeval serpent capable of assuming the guise of a woman, the Lady Arabella. She is the cause of Caswall's eventual destruction, and not Adam or Mimi.

Caswall's attempts to subject Lilla are likened to those of a bird of prey terrifying a pigeon. Moreover, when Caswall flies a gigantic hawk-like kite from his turret, it crows the flocks of nun-like Columba pigeons with their cowl-like markings, (p. 95). This imagery is extended in the name of the 'good' Watfords' home - 'Mercy Farm', (contrasted with 'The Lair of the White Worm'), built on the holy site of a former priory dedicated to St. Columba.

The principal mesmeric symbol in the novel is electricity. When Adam and Mimi first meet, "some sort of electricity flashed... Men call it 'love'," (pp. 34-35). This electricity is of a 'good' nature, however, whereas the electricity of Edgar Caswall is essentially evil, his magnetism, again, implying not a mutual attraction between lovers but the impulse of the mesmerist to destroy the freedom and individuality of the subject. The

evil of Caswall's 'electricity' is, once more, related to a wider cosmic significance, the convulsion of an electric storm:

Electrical disturbance in the sky and the air is reproduced in animals of all kinds, and particularly in the highest type of them all - the most receptive - the most electrical. So it was with Edgar Caswall, despite his selfish nature and coldness of blood, (p. 173).

Caswall flies his kite - symbolic of his mesmeric domination of the district - on some of the wire he had removed from Mesmer's chest. When the kite is struck by lightning and the turret with it, Caswall is killed, and the electricity is conveyed along the wire to Lady Arabella's home, where she has concealed the other end of it, intending to trap the unresponsive Caswall when he came to retrieve it, the menace of the White Worm too, therefore, is destroyed.

The root of Caswall's evil attempts to subject others is seen by Stoker in the monomaniac nature of the mesmeric "type": "It is such persons who become imbued with the idea that they have the attributes of the Almighty - even that they themselves are the Almighty", (p. 175).

In other words, Caswall is evil because he aspires to rule others as God rules. That he is evil is clearly apparent because the aspiration has resulted in the death of Lilla Watford, the innocent.

My dear Doctor,

Thirteen months ago I wrote to you that this story had come to a close. I am glad to hear that you are well, and in all probability, I am sure, you will find your constant watchfulness and kindness... and so I am sure, let me record them here to you. I am, dear Doctor, ever your most obedient servant.

Yours most obedient servant,
J.M. Thackeray.

(Pendennis, p. 31)

Thackeray further emphasized the character of Dr. John Goodenough on his... (Pendennis, p. 309).

In Pendennis, Chapter 52, Thackeray describes various emotional disturbances, (p. 329). The... (Pendennis, p. 329).

(11) W.M. Thackeray, (1811-1863): Vanity Fair, (1848) and Pendennis, (1848-50).

(Vanity Fair, Penguin edtn., 1972; Pendennis, Penguin, 1972).

In Chapter 7 it was stated that Thackeray knew Dr. John Elliotson, who tended him during his severe illness of 1849. It is clear that, probably through Elliotson, Thackeray knew a great deal about Mesmerism, because at the beginning of Chapter 23 of Vanity Fair, (1848), he introduced the phenomenon in relation to the power of friendship:

What is the secret mesmerism which friendship possesses, and under the operation of which a person ordinarily sluggish, or cold, or timid, becomes wise, active and resolute, in another's behalf? As Alexis, after a few passes from Dr. Elliotson, despises pain, reads with the back of his head, sees miles off, looks into next week, and performs other wonders, of which, in his own private normal condition, he is quite incapable; so you see, in the affairs of the world and under the magnetism of friendship, the modest man becomes bold, the shy confident, the lazy active, or the impetuous prudent and peaceful, (p. 266).

(Alexis was the French mesmeric somnambule; see Chapter 3, note 11).

In 1849, when Thackeray was writing Pendennis and became dangerously ill with a bilious fever, it was Dr. Elliotson who restored him to health. Thackeray was deeply grateful to Elliotson, and for the devoted way in which he tended him. Elliotson did not use Mesmerism to assist Thackeray, but the significance of their relationship lies in the fact that Thackeray subsequently dedicated Pendennis to him, revealing that his opinion of him was as high as that of Wilkie Collins:

My dear Doctor,

Thirteen months ago, when it seemed likely that this story had come to a close, a kind friend brought you to my bedside, whence, in all probability, I never should have risen but for your constant watchfulness and skill. I like to recall your great goodness and kindness ... and as you would take no other fee but thanks, let me record them here in behalf of me and mine, and subscribe myself

Yours most sincerely and gratefully,
W.M. Thackeray,

(Pendennis, p. 31)

Thackeray further complimented Elliotson by basing the character of Dr. John Goodenough on him, (Donald Hawes, editor of Pendennis, p. 809).

In Pendennis, Chapter 51, Pendennis falls ill because of various emotional disturbances, (p. 529). His uncle, Major Pendennis, sends

urgently for his friend, Dr. Goodenough, whom we learn, "quitted his dinner immediately," (p. 535), to hasten to Pendennis' sick-bed. Dr. Goodenough is called "the kind-hearted physician", (ibid), and he looks after Pendennis with great care, seeing him twice a day and promising to "do all in his power for him", (p. 536).

Goodenough is kind to Fanny when Helen Pendennis expels her from her son's sick-room, (p. 539). His presence is a blessing: "he came like an angel into the room", (p. 540).

Pendennis' health deteriorates, and Goodenough concocts a potion which saves him. Goodenough is described as, "the good and honest, and benevolent man", (p. 541), and Mr. Costigan venerates him, (p. 542). He is described as, "honest Dr. Goodenough", (p. 554), "that kind and friendly physician", (p. 557), who has Pendennis' hair cut and ice placed on his head when the fever is at its height. He is "kind Dr. Goodenough", "the good Doctor", (p. 566), who, with regard to Fanny, "had kindly tended her, and kept her life", (p. 588).

Thackeray includes a reference to his own treatment by the devoted Dr. Elliotson, emphasising the parallel with the relationship between Pendennis and Dr. Goodenough:

Let Pen's biographer be pardoned for alluding to a time not far distant when a somewhat similar mishap brought him a providential friend, a kind physician, and a thousand proofs of a most touching and surprising kindness and sympathy, (p. 555).

Mesmerism is not a theme central to Thackeray's fiction, but his introduction of it into the imagery of Vanity Fair, and of Dr. Elliotson - the chief exponent of the phenomenon - as Dr. Goodenough in Pendennis, indicates his interest in it and awareness of its contemporary importance.

Mesmerism, Hypnosis and the Theatre

So far the uses of Mesmerism in the novel and in poetry have been considered, without reference to drama. In view of the not infrequent appearance of Mesmerism in poetry and prose, it is surprising that the phenomenon had comparatively little impact upon the stage. There are several plays with mesmeric themes in existence, but the principal form in which the phenomenon occurs in the theatre is in a non-dramatic context, in the form of stage-hypnosis. First, however, some examples of dramatic presentation of Mesmerism may be considered.

Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald, (1753-1821): Animal Magnetism, (c. 1789).

(Dick's British Drama, 1872, x, p. 118 following).

This early play concerned with Mesmerism is a three-act farce, set in France. It is a satirisation of the gullibility of the Doctor's belief in Mesmerism similar to Congreve's satirisation of Foresight's astrological gullibility in Love for Love, (1695).

In Animal Magnetism the Doctor, rejected by the medical faculty for his ignorance and incompetence, makes overtures to the new sect of mesmerists who, "by the power of magnetism ... can cure any ill, or inspire any passion," (p. 120).

The Doctor describes the mesmeric process: "... every effect is produced upon the frame merely by the power of the magnet, which is held in the hand of the physician, as a wand of a conjuror is held in his".(ibid).

The Doctor is awaiting the arrival of a magnetizer, Dr. Mystery. The Doctor has a ward, Constance, whom he keeps confined and whom he intends to marry. A friend of Constance's lover, La Fleur, gains access to her, however, disguised as Dr. Mystery, the mesmerist. The Doctor calls La Fleur, "author and first discoverer of that healing and sublime art, Animal Magnetism", (ibid). La Fleur gulls the Doctor, telling him, "there is an universal fluid, which spreads throughout all nature", (p. 121), which he proceeds to describe in a highly nonsensical exposition. The Doctor asks La Fleur, "What are the means you employ?" La Fleur's reply is: "Merely

gestures, or a simple touch", (ibid).

La Fleur agrees to give a demonstration. Again, it turns out to be absurdly comic:

... by holding up this wand, which is a magnet, in a particular position, I will so direct the fluid, that it shall immediately give you the most excruciating rheumatism ... I will then change it to the gout; then to strong convulsions; and after, into a raging fever", (ibid).

La Fleur arranges to bring a patient to be magnetized before the Doctor.

Act 2 of the play involves a farcical pretence of Mesmerism: to gull the Doctor, Constance and her maid respond to the magnetic wand, so that they both 'fall in love' with whoever is holding the wand towards them.

Act 3 involves the deception of the Doctor, who is made to believe that La Fleur, (now disguised as the patient), has died through the Doctor's incompetence. The Marquis, Constance's lover, accuses him of being "a notorious professor of quackery", (p. 127), and agrees to help him only if he will permit the marriage of himself to Constance. The Doctor signs the marriage contract, and the deception is revealed, the Marquis concluding: "for believe me, Doctor, there is no magnetism like the powerful magnetism of love", (p. 128).

The play's treatment of Mesmerism is essentially light-hearted, with no serious aim of satirising mesmeric fraudulence. The Doctor's gullibility is exploited, but Mesmerism is not Mrs. Inchbald's 'target' so much as a device in a comic, domestic situation, introduced as the means whereby two lovers are happily united in defiance of a tyrannical guardian.

James Redding Ware, (32): The Polish Jew, (c. 1864)

(Dick's British Drama, 1872, xii, p. 306 following).

J.R. Ware's play was in fact a translation from the French version of E. Erckmann and A. Chatrian. Ware also produced a ~~press~~ version of the work in novel form.

The Polish Jew treats Mesmerism seriously and employs unusual techniques

The play concerns Mathis, an Alsatian burgomaster who, many years previously, had murdered a travelling Polish Jew, robbing him. The Jew's body has never been discovered. Mathis returns to the village on Christmas Eve, disturbed by some mesmeric activities which he and Heinrich have witnessed at Ribeauville. Mathis explains, "There is a man at Ribeauville who sends people to sleep... he moves his hands, and they fall asleep," (p. 308). Heinrich adds that, "when they are asleep he makes them tell their secrets", (ibid).

Mathis is unnerved by the arrival of a Polish Jew similar to the man he murdered, and by the intentions of his prospective son-in-law, Christian, to investigate the old mystery of the Jew's murder. Mathis asserts: "'Twas the mesmerist that upset me", (p. 310).

Apparently, in Ribeauville the mesmerist had tried to mesmerise Mathis, but he had resisted: "'Tis such sleeping as this which comes from the Devil. You might tell tales in your sleep", (ibid).

However, fearing just this, he retires alone, (p. 313). His bedroom now becomes a court-room, in which a mesmerist states that he can prove Mathis' guilt through mesmeric trance, if he uses some possession of the dead man's.

Mathis denounces mesmerists as, "quacks who go from fair to fair, and play their tricks for copper pieces", (p. 314). However, he is forcibly wrapped in the dead Jew's coat, is mesmerised, and reveals in mesmeric trance how he brutally murdered and robbed the Jew, (p. 315). Horrified, Christian kills himself, and Mathis is to be hanged.(33).

At the end of the play, however, we in fact discover that Mathis has died of apoplexy in his sleep, having consumed too much wine: the court-room and mesmeric session occurred in his dream.

The Polish Jew, therefore, uses Mesmerism in a remarkably serious sense, though as a dream-sequence rather than a literal occurrence. The play's unusual techniques are interesting because of the shifts in both place, (from the bedroom to the court-room), and ^{at} ~~it~~ time, (Mathis originally

retires after the wedding celebrations of his daughter Annette to Christian, pp. 310-313. At the end of the play, however, when his death is discovered, we learn that this is in fact the morning of the wedding, p. 316), all of which can be accounted for in terms of the dream-convention of the play.

Stage Hypnosis

Stage hypnosis has no right to be termed either 'hypnosis' or 'Mesmerism', but is so-called probably because its rise occurred when Mesmerism, as such, had died, superseded by hypnosis.

Stage 'hypnosis' involves members of the audience in the music-hall or theatre being invited on to the stage by a so-called 'hypnotist', who then 'hypnotises' the volunteers and induces them to perform various antics or actions, some of which are often extraordinary.

The 1910 edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica referred to such events as "disgusting stage-performances whose only object was to raise a laugh." (34).

But do stage hypnotists genuinely employ hypnosis? F.L. Marcuse considers that, generally speaking, they do not: "In public performances hypnosis may not actually be used even though the act is advertised and referred to as a 'hypnotic act'..." (35). Marcuse believes that the apparent successes of the stage hypnotist with subjects are due to his simulating hypnosis: he "obtains their co-operation in 'fooling the audience'. This is usually done by whispering instructions to the volunteers", (Marcuse, p. 180).

Another reason for the apparent 'success' of the performance is that the hypnotist brings his own subjects and makes them react to a post-hypnotic signal: "In a procedure which employs a post-hypnotic signal given from the stage, the very call for volunteers may constitute the signal for the resurgence of the hypnotic state", (Marcuse, p. 181).

A third explanation of the apparent success is that the hypnotist advertises for subjects beforehand, and makes them respond to a post-hypnotic suggestion, (Marcuse, p. 182), and a fourth explanation is that

the hypnotist does indeed attempt genuine hypnosis, though this is rare, (ibid).

Bernard C. Gindes gives a full account of the procedure involved in stage hypnosis. The hypnotist,

first... gives his explanation of hypnosis... With audience interest at its height, he calls for a 'volunteer'... the first volunteer is always a 'plant' - a subject who has been trained through constant conditioning and whose susceptibility is constant and dependable. He instantly enters such deep trance that the hypnotist can pierce his arm with a needle without drawing blood. Now the audience is convinced ... the next volunteer - this time authentic - is also convinced.(36).

Gindes explains the genuine volunteer's successful response in terms of the power of his own belief, based on the success of the 'plant's' response, the entrancing suggestions of the hypnotist, and so on, (Gindes, p. 64).

Peter Blythe, moreover, observes:

The stage hypnotist is fully aware that people who are used to following orders without question make the best subjects, and into this category fall soldiers, sailors, airmen etc... His next step is to test each one of them to see if they will accept him as an authority-figure, and approximately one in five will. The others... are politely asked to return to their seats.(37).

Having secured and 'hypnotised' his subjects, by whatever means, and however successfully, the hypnotist is able to make them obey him. F.L. Marcuse lists examples of people being made to believe they are famous singers, and singing, of subjects induced to believe that old brooms are beautiful actresses to whom they are to make love, of volunteers being unable to unclasp their own hands, behaving as children or old people, running about etc., to the great amusement of audiences, (Marcuse, pp. 182-183)

These uncontrolled performances are now illegal. Peter Blythe says: "the Hypnotic Act of 1953 ... forbids the use of hypnosis as entertainment in places where the general public are admitted without first obtaining permission from the local magistrate", (Blythe, p. 3).

Such a law seems to have been regarded necessary because these performances are, obviously, "potentially dangerous", (Marcuse, p. 183), and because they bring genuine, scientific hypnosis into disrepute.

NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

- (1) Rev. George Sandby: Mesmerism and its Opponents, (1848), pp. 163-164.
- (2) Edwin Preston Dargan: Honoré de Balzac, A Force of Nature, Chicago, Illinois, (1932), p. 82.

Fred Kaplan observes: "Balzac wrote widely popular novels in which mesmerism was a plot device and theme", 'The Mesmeric Mania - The Early Victorians and Animal Magnetism', Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. 35, no. 4, Oct. - Dec. 1974, p. 695.

- (3) Ralph Waldo Emerson: Complete Works, iii, 'Essays', 'The Poet', (1844), Riverside edtn., (1883), p. 36.
- (4) David Galloway, 'Notes' to Selected Writings of Edgar Allen Poe, Penguin edtn., (1967), p. 532. The following reference is to this edition.
- (5) Elizabeth Barrett wrote to Browning of Poe and this horrific story, saying that Harriet Martineau had sent her:

a most frightful extract from an American magazine... on the subject of mesmerism... the Mr. Edgar Poe who stands committed in it, is my dedicatior... so, while I am sending, you shall have his poems with his mesmeric experience to decide whether the outrageous compliment to Elizabeth Barrett Browning or the experiment on M. Vandeleur (Valdemar) goes furthest to prove him mad, Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ed. R.W.B. Browning, (1899), i, pp. 431-432; letter dated Jan. 26th, 1846.

- (6) The Mesmerist, a Journal of Vital Magnetism, no. 2, May 20th, 1843, p.12

The Rev. George Sandby, on the other hand, expressed his disagreement with "the common opinion, that the effects of Mesmerism are limited to a few nervous and fanciful persons, chiefly of the weaker sex", Mesmerism and its Opponents, (1848), p. 145.

- (7) Saul Bellow: Dangling Man, Penguin edtn., (1963), pp. 40-44, where Abt (Morris) hypnotises Minna at a party. He then pinches her, and she feels no pain; she obeys his commands, and he appears to derive pleasure from physically ill-treating her while she is in hypnotic trance. In this context, the sexual domination attained by the man is explicitly sadistic.

- (8) Barbara Hardy, 'Notes', Daniel Deronda, (1874), Penguin edtn., (1967)p.88
 - (9) Angus Calder, 'Notes', Great Expectations, (1860), Penguin edtn., (1965), p. 500.
 - (10) Milton Levin: Noel Coward, New York, (1968), p. 85.
 - (11) Manuscript sheet entitled Comp. 1849, preserved at Yale and now part of the so-called 'Yale manuscripts'.
 - (12) Joseph Glanvill: The Vanity of Dogmatizing, with a note by M.E. Prior, New York, (1931).
- Arnold included the relevant section of Glanvill's work in his own edition of his poems, The Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold with explanatory notes by the author, (c. 1900), New York, p. 255.
- (13) J.P. Curgenvin: 'The Scholar Gipsy - A Study of the Growth, Meaning and Integration of a poem', Litera (II), 1955, p. 42, published in Turkey.
 - (14) The Poetry of Matthew Arnold, a commentary by G.B. Tinker and H.F. Lowry, (1940), p. 207.
 - (15) Osbert Burdett: The Brownings, (1928), p. 58.
 - (16) Arthur Symons: An Introduction to the Study of Browning, (1906), p.129.
 - (17) Ezra Pound: Personae, (1926), New York, 'Mesmerism', p. 13, stanza 1.
 - (18) G. Robert Strange: 'Browning and Modern Poetry', Browning's Mind and Art, ed. Clarence Tracy, (1968), Edinburgh, p. 189.
 - (19) Robert Lee Wolff: Strange Stories and other explorations in Victorian Fiction, Boston, (1971), p. 20.
 - (20) S.M. Ellis: Wilkie Collins, Le Fanu and others, (1931), pp. 27-28.
Ellis is quoting John G. Millais' account of the events as told by his father, the artist Sir John Everett Millais, (1829-1896), a friend of Collins, who was present at the time of the encounter. Collins later told his companions that the young woman had been subjected to 'mesmeric influences'.
 - (21) J.I.M. Stewart, 'Introduction' to The Moonstone, (1868), Penguin edtn., (1966), p. 18. All quotations from the novel, later in this section, are from this edition.

Clyde K. Hyder: 'Wilkie Collins and the Woman in White',
Victorian Literature, ed. Austin Wright, (1961), p. 129.

Julian Symons: 'Introduction' to The Woman in White, (1859-60),
 Penguin edtn., (1974), p. 11. All quotations from the novel are
 from this edition.

- (22) There was considerable interest in Indian Mesmerism following the
 publication of J. Esdaile's Mesmerism in India, (1846), and
The Introduction of Mesmerism ... into the hospitals of India, (1856).
- (23) For example in Sketches by Boz, (1836-37), 'Our Parish', Chapter 7, 1957
 edtn., p. 41: "Some phrenologists affirm, that the agitation of a
 man's brain by different passions, produces corresponding developments
 in the form of his skull...";
 In Great Expectations, (1860-61), Penguin edtn., Chapter 42, p. 361,
 where Magwitch says of his experiences as a young 'offender': "They
 measured my head..."
 In Edwin Drood, p. 202, we read of Mr. Crisparkle: "He had now
 an opportunity of observing that as to the phrenological formation of
 the back of their heads..."
- (24) A Loyal Dickensian: Dickens' Mystery of Edwin Drood, completed by,
 (1927), p. 3.
- (25) Angus Wilson: 'Introduction' to Edwin Drood, Penguin edtn. p. 23.

There are numerous references in the novel to Macbeth, e.g.
 on pp. 124, 140, and the title of Chapter 14.

W. Robertson Nicholl sees a parallel between the murder of
 Duncan by Macbeth, (his kinsman, host and subject), with the blame
 falling on Duncan's innocent sons, who flee; and the (possible) murder
 of Edwin by Jasper, (his kinsman, host and guardian), the blame
 falling on the innocent Neville Landless, who flees: The Problem of
 Edwin Drood, (1912), p. 117.

- (26) This notion of a sympathy between the elements and events occurring in
 human society, constitutes a 'pathetic fallacy'.

Shakespeare introduces the phenomenon into several plays: Julius Caesar, 1(i) and 2(ii); Macbeth, 2(iv), and King Lear, 3(i), (ii), (iv), usually in the context of an atmospheric 'storm' paralleling a catastrophe in human hierarchies.

The notion survived. W. Robertson Nicholl sees its operation in Barnaby Rudge, (1841), The Problem of Edwin Drood, (1912), p. 117.

H.H. Bonnell sees a similar correspondence between the activity of the elements and human affairs in Charlotte Brontë's novels: Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot and Jane Austen, studies in their works, (1902), 1(b), part 1.

- (27) Felix Aylmer: The Drood Case, (1964), p. 14. All following references are to this work.

The reference to Forster relates to the latter's suggestion of the ending projected for the novel by Dickens.

- (28) Leonée Ormond: George du Maurier, (1969), p. 447. This work is later referred to as 'Ormond'.
- (29) Count Szpary's activities were referred to by the Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, Facts in Mesmerism, (1844), p. xxii. Subsequent references are to this work.
- (30) Louis Satow: Hypnotism and Suggestion, trans. B. Miall, (1923), p. 37.
- (31) Fred Kaplan: 'The Mesmeric Mania, The Early Victorians and Animal Magnetism', Journal of the History of Ideas, vol. 35, no. 4, Oct. - Dec. 1974, p. 695.

H.S. Thompson quoted the poem in the Zoist, Vol. 8, Mar. 1850 - Jan. 1851, pp. 133-134, claiming the work as an exploration of the theme of Mesmerism.

- (32) J.R. Ware also wrote under the pseudonym of 'Laiteste O'Meagre'.
- (33) An interesting parallel to this notion of a man revealing his guilt under mesmeric influences, is found in Peter Shaffer's play Equus, (1973). In this work there is a scene involving hypnotism, in which hypnosis is used to discover the reason why a youth, Alan Strang,

has committed a violent crime in the mutilation of some horses. Helen Dawson says that the psychiatrist, Martin Dysart, discovers the truth, "with the help of hypnosis", 'Review of Equus', Plays and Players, Vol. 20, no. 12, issue 240, Sept. 1973, p. 44.

(34) The Encyclopedia Britannica, eleventh edtn., (1910), Vol. XIV, p. 203.

(35) F.L. Marcuse: Hypnosis, Fact and Fiction, (1959), p. 180. All quotations from this work are cited as 'Marcuse'.

(36) Bernard C. Gindes: New Concepts of Hypnosis, (1953), pp. 62-63.

The following references are to this work, and the work is later cited as 'Gindes'.

(37) Peter Blythe: Hypnotism, its Power and Practice, New York, (1971), pp. 20-21.

The work is later referred to as 'Blythe'.

(38) The Stage and Television Today, no. 4899, 6th March, 1975, p. 32.

The letters and other material which have been used in this study indicate how seriously Harriet Martineau regarded Mesmerism. This seriousness was the direct result of the all-important 'cure' of 1844, which seemed to her to have saved and transformed her life.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Mesmerism did not have as great an influence upon the literature of the 19th century as one would expect in view of the considerable interest with which many notable contemporaries regarded it, and, more important, of the deep involvement which some of them had in the phenomenon.

Mesmerism formed a centre of lively controversy in the 19th century, at times involving the most extraordinary claims, and yet containing elements of truth that many intelligent minds were able to perceive. For a large number of people, the Mesmeric controversy centred upon the character and experience of Harriet Martineau.

She was remarkable for the degree of her involvement, occurring as it did at the climax of a complex and problematic medical history. She herself emerges as a character of great interest, in many respects eminently rational, in others an eccentric. Not the least interesting aspect of her, and especially, of her involvement in Mesmerism, was her strange relationship with Henry George Atkinson.

The letters and other material which have been used in this study indicate how seriously Harriet Martineau regarded Mesmerism. This seriousness was the direct result of the all-important 'cure' of 1844, which seemed to her to have saved and transformed her life.

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